



# WITHOUT BORDERS or *LIMITS*

An Interdisciplinary  
Approach to  
Anarchist Studies

Edited by  
JORELL A. MELÉNDEZ BADILLO  
and NATHAN J. JUN

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**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

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P U B L I S H I N G

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## PREFACE

# ANARCHIST STUDIES AFTER NAASN-III: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

JESSE COHN

Driving to the Canadian border in January 2011, headed for Toronto and NAASN-II with my friends Daniel and Susan, I was asked the purpose of our visit. “To attend an academic conference,” I said, perhaps a little too briskly, because the guard in the booth pressed us: “On what subject?” “On anarchism,” I said, affecting a casual tone. We were asked to pull over, and while the car was searched, a customs agent started grilling us: how did we know each other? Where were we staying? What were we going to be doing? Finally, I pulled out the conference program and showed him: “Look, I want to go to this guy’s presentation—he’s going to be talking about his *dissertation*...” It was like a magic spell, that word: *dissertation*. The agent relaxed visibly. “Oh, I see— you’re just *studying* anarchism! You’re not talking about *being* anarchists.” “No,” I lied, smiling, as if at a small, private joke. We were let through.

There are many, of course, for whom the very idea of an “anarchist conference” or “anarchist studies” is a joke (fig. 1), or an oxymoron at best. Probably most of these have never heard of the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* or Peoples’ Global Action. Some who have never picked up a copy of David Graeber’s *Debt* or Peter Kropotkin’s *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* may think of anarchism as anti-intellectual, as pure action (but not as cognitive or social activity). Some of us, for whom anarchism is, among other things, a way of *thinking otherwise*, are nonetheless skeptical about the notion of an “anarchist conference” or “anarchist studies” for quite other reasons. “Anarchist studies” can indeed sound like just another item in a long list of topics for dissertations—urban studies, women’s studies, cultural studies, disability studies, science and technology studies, etc.—which begs the question: are we, in fact, *studying* it or *doing* it?

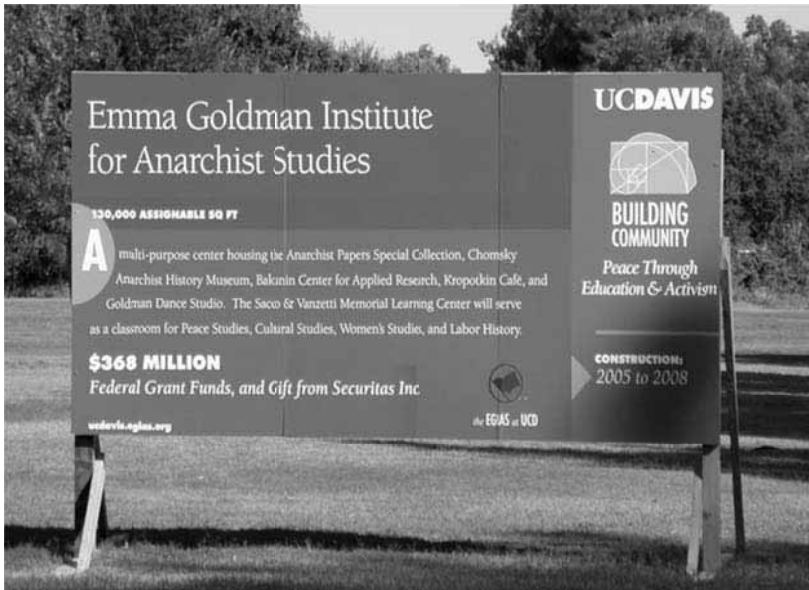


Fig. 1: Steve Lambert, *Emma Goldman Institute for Anarchist Studies*, 2005 (wood, inkjet print on adhesive vinyl; 7' x 10'). See <http://visitsteve.com/made/emma/>.

Of course, it is entirely possible to study and to do at the same time, to engage in a self-critical practice, but it is hard not to think with discomfort of the ways in which some radical movements have been academicized, textualized, neutralized, made safe. Sometimes that aura of safety has its tactical uses—like getting three people past a squad of paranoid border agents, say, or channeling institutional resources to popular and even subversive projects. The old asylum law in Greece, which used to make it illegal for police to come onto a university campus, might not have existed anywhere else, but in a manner of speaking, universities can and do act as a kind of refuge for radical projects that have been left few other social interstices to inhabit, a holdover from their historical roots as quasi-autonomous medieval guilds, resistant to the utilitarian logic of the marketplace.<sup>1</sup> Those of us with academic jobs might even think of “anarchist studies” as a kind of *perruque*, to borrow the French slang term: “the worker’s own work disguised as work for his [or her] employer,” as Michel de Certeau explains, like “a secretary’s writing a love letter on ‘company time.’”<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes, when I do research on anarchism on “company time” (and almost any block of my time can become, and often does become, “company time”), it does indeed feel like I am stealing that time to write love letters to Gustav Landauer, Voltairine de Cleyre, Ricardo Flores Magón, or Red Emma herself.

However, not all the people at Toronto or San Juan have that luxury (if that’s what it is), and the sense of tension is not so easy to dispel. Unlike congresses (like the International Anarchist Congress of Amsterdam, 1907), gatherings (like the North American Anarchist Gathering in Lawrence, Kansas, 2002), or convergences (like last summer’s Anarchist People of Color Convergence, or, more playfully, APOCalyypse), *conferences* are pretty evidently a format that does not come from within the anarchist tradition. Panels of speakers sit behind a table, faced by ranks of politely seated spectators—isn’t this set up pretty thoroughly imbricated with the kinds of hierarchy that make academia an extension of the State and capitalism?<sup>3</sup> Aren’t we still part of a competition for academic capital, racking up lines on our CVs? What if a North American Anarchist Studies Network Conference *is* a terrible joke?

A good farce requires the actors to be unaware of their own actions. We are, at least, self-conscious—sometimes painfully so. From the very first meeting of the NAASN in Hartford, Connecticut in 2009, we have been questioning and debating the relationship between anarchist studies and academia. We have experimented with everything from the use of alternative spaces (a community center in Hartford, a union hall in Toronto, the beautiful *Ateneo Puertorriqueño* in San Juan) to alternative forms of seating (particularly the circle), confronting phenomena of oppression where they emerge (notably turning the closing session of NAASN-II into an intervention against sexism and rape). We have been trying to adopt some of the practices of facilitation commonly used in consensus-based organizing—e.g., “taking progressive stack” to disrupt the kinds of hierarchy and domination that routinely reproduce themselves in our spaces of discussion. We have hoped to encourage the participation of academics and non-academics alike, to break down the discipline imposed by scholarly “disciplines,” and indeed, we have created spaces where, for a time, musicians and street medics, ethnographers and English professors, farmers and filmmakers, librarians and labor organizers can rub elbows. And in the process, we have built a sense of solidarity and conviviality unlike any I have found in the academy “proper.”

This is not to say that we have miraculously resolved the contradictions of social life and cognition under capitalism, the State, sexism, or any of the other intersecting and overlapping systems of oppression that make it

so difficult for us to talk and listen and think together. For example: I decided that for my talk at NAASN-III, I would try to avoid reproducing the presentation format, and particularly the oral delivery of a paper that I find so awkward and alienating. My first wish was not to make a “presentation” at all, but to organize something like a skill-share (a common feature of anarchist convergences). There had been a well-attended and successful workshop on radical writing at NAASN-II, and much of my work as an anarchist scholar involves translating writings from French and Spanish into English—it’s one of my favorite activities. Why not a workshop on translating texts?

Unfortunately, it was not to be—there wasn’t enough interest, and perhaps it would have been difficult to slot into the space and time of the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño*, which seemed to favor a series of panels rather than concurrent sessions (eliminating the old problem of deciding which of two or twenty panels to attend). Instead, I opted to give an informal talk about the kinds of uses of academic high theory that I had been finding inspiring, rather than annoying, and helpful in illuminating the anarchist tradition (“Getting at Anarchist Theory via Anarchist Practices: Or, ‘Political Thinking in the Streets’”). This worked fairly well, I thought; I was comfortable, the audience was responsive, and it felt more like an exchange than another academic performance. But this meant that when it came time to gather texts for this collection, I came up empty-handed. Fortunately for my CV, Jorell Meléndez was kind enough to ask me to write this preface, so in institutional terms, it will still “count.” Otherwise, whatever I said, whatever we shared, would have failed to register in the University’s great virtual ledger of merits and demerits.

The miraculous thing is that in spite of all of these difficulties and limitations, about once a year, the NAASN actually does manage to bring people of at least three language groups from all corners of this continent to do the things that the university is supposed to do—to have this open, exploratory, revivifying exchange of ideas—and to do it across all kinds of borders and boundaries, national, disciplinary, and otherwise.<sup>4</sup> We do this in a way that actually *is* self-critical and questioning and experimental, the things that scholarship is supposed to be. Apparently, we do it well enough to draw police attention on a regular basis, even if the academic aura has so far shielded us from too much hostility from that quarter. And as we repeat this performance, extending this little space of conversation across time—producing an “anarchist counterpublic,” Kathy Ferguson would call it—we are slowly bringing into being something that we presupposed: something called “anarchist studies.”<sup>5</sup>

In one sense, certainly, we're not inventing anything new. The Institute for Anarchist Studies has been working out of New York for nearly two decades now, and the UK-based journal *Anarchist Studies* has been around since 1993. More than half a century ago, you could find journals like *The University Libertarian* (Manchester, UK, 1955-1960) and *Etudes anarchistes: bulletin d'etudes et de critiques de la federation anarchiste* (Paris, 1948-1952). The origins of "anarchist studies" might be seen to melt back into the entire history of anarchist educational practice, with its *ateneos* and study circles, its Ferrer Schools and Hobo Colleges (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: A meeting of a Hobo College in Chicago, date unknown.

In another sense... well, it is still early to say what we are doing that is new, but I am encouraged by at least a few tendencies that were on display at NAASN-III:

- *Reflexive history.* There is a sense that part of the point of anarchist studies is not just to add a new flavor variety to what is already on offer within the academy (the better to compete for academic capital), but really to learn from anarchism's past (the better to think about what its future possibilities might be and draw them out). We might be acting as some of the movement's informal archivists and strategists, one of its think tanks.
- *Theoretical bricolage.* At the same time, there is an ongoing

attempt to think about how some tools developed within the academy—bits of poststructuralism or ethnography or academicized feminism, queer activism, critical race theory, and Marxism—might be useful for rethinking anarchism.

- *Reverse reading.* And we don't stop at being theoretical magpies, expropriating bits of academic discourse for our own purposes; we are also drawing theoretical tools from the anarchist tradition to do scholarly work on a full spectrum of subjects, from anthropology to art history, from intellectual property to international relations, from economics to ethnography, from philosophy to pedagogy.<sup>6</sup> We read these subjects with a difference—sometimes a quiet difference, sometimes louder.

My sense of things is that if we keep adventuring along this path, we will not be passively incorporated into the (ever crumbling) academic structures that serve some of us as temporary lodgings. We have other places to go.

## Notes

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1. For the most romantic version of this argument, see Paul Goodman, *The Community of Scholars* (New York: Random House, 1962). For a highly depressing antidote to romanticism, see Geoffrey D. White and Flannery C. Hauck, eds., *Campus, Inc: Corporate Power in the Ivory Tower* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2000).
  2. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 26.
  3. Let's face it—the Middle Ages were a long time ago, and what's left of the tradition of faculty self-management is pretty ceremonial, with real power having long since been absorbed into Administration. (Even Goodman, writing in 1962, could see this process in action.)
  4. We even seem to manage to avoid much (if not all) of the sectarian infighting that is pretty endemic to anarchism—insurrectionalism versus platformism versus primitivism versus pacifism, etc., etc. This ought to strike anyone who has ever read the comment threads on [anarchistnews.org](http://anarchistnews.org) as pretty remarkable.
  5. Kathy E. Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), pp. 71-75.
  6. However, we have yet to see a lot of developments in the natural sciences and technological fields—a crucial gap. Where are the hacker geniuses, the visionary physicists, the permaculture mavens and eco-architects?

## INTRODUCTION

NATHAN JUN AND JORELL MELÉNDEZ

As a philosophical and political movement, anarchism has been expanding for two centuries and continues to grow and develop in a genuinely cosmopolitan manner around the world. In fact, as the Argentinean sociologist Christian Ferrer argues, anarchism may be considered, “after Christian evangelization and capitalist expansion, the most successful migratory experience in the history of the world.”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, academic research on anarchism has long been viewed as irrelevant and obscure; it is only in the context of recent political events—events in which the decentralized organizational strategies advocated by anarchists throughout history have played a prominent role—that academics have begun to take a second look at anarchist theory and practice. Not surprisingly many if not most academic studies of anarchism have been carried out within conventional disciplinary boundaries. However, if we recognize anarchism as “a locally contextualized [but also] historically specific manifestation of a larger antiauthoritarian tradition,”<sup>2</sup> we would do well to heed George Woodcock’s suggestion that “simplicity is, precisely, the first thing we need to avoid”<sup>3</sup> in studying anarchism. To the extent that conventional disciplinary methods can be and often are too “simple” for something as complex as anarchism, this book advocates the use of pluralistic, interdisciplinary approaches to the emerging field of anarchist studies.

“Anarchism,” writes Peter Marshall, “is not only an inspiring idea but [also]... part of a broader historical movement”<sup>4</sup> which begins with the revolutions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and continues through the French Commune in the 1870s, the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, and the emergence of the New Left in the 1960s. More recently, one need look no further than the uprising of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*<sup>5</sup> in 1994, the Seattle anti-WTO protests in 1999, the Arab Spring in 2010, Occupy Wall Street and the Spanish *indignado* movement in 2011, and the Québec student protests in 2012 for confirmation of David Graeber’s hypothesis that “anarchism is undergoing a veritable renaissance” and that “anarchist principles—autonomy, voluntary

association, self-organization, direct democracy, mutual aid—have become the basis for organizing new social movements from Karnataka to Buenos Aires.”<sup>6</sup> For all this interest and enthusiasm, however, anarchist history has been largely overlooked and underappreciated, while anarchist theory and practice have been, and continue to be, widely misunderstood. The burgeoning field of anarchist studies has evolved in part to remedy this situation.

The vitality of contemporary anarchist studies is evidenced by the steady proliferation of organizations (e.g., the North American Anarchist Studies Network, the Anarchist Studies Network in the UK) and projects (e.g., the Anarchist Studies Initiative at the State University of New York at Cortland, Continuum Books’ Contemporary Anarchist Studies series)—to say nothing of countless informal initiatives (e.g., Free Schools, Infoshops) around the world. This book seeks not only to provide a representative sample of the sort of work being done in contemporary anarchist studies, but also to contribute actively to the growth and development of the field. Although it is a product of conversations, debates, and presentations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Annual North American Anarchist Studies Network Conference* (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2012), it is not merely a record of proceedings. The chapters contained herein aim to demonstrate the dynamic, multifaceted, and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary anarchist studies and, in so doing, to promote and maintain dialogue between the different academic fields which comprise it.

With these ends in mind, we propose three concrete objectives for the present volume: first, to represent “anarchist studies” as a credible and independent field of intellectual inquiry; second, to situate anarchism within a broader transhistorical and transcultural antiauthoritarian tradition, as demonstrated by the wide range of topics discussed; and third, to formulate an approach to anarchist studies which, following Murray Bookchin’s suggestion, can anchor “seemingly disparate social problems in an analysis of the underlying social relations: capitalism and hierarchical society”<sup>7</sup> and which, in the words of David Graeber, is not “based on the need to prove others’ fundamental assumptions wrong...” but “to find particular projects which reinforce each other.” The book is accordingly divided into five parts, each of which represents a dialogue between the chapters contained within them.

Part One, which is dedicated to philosophy and theory, attempts to place classical anarchism in conversation with contemporary anarchist theory. Dana Williams’ contribution seeks to forge a link between the ideas of classical anarchist theorists (such as Proudhon and Kropotkin) and various pioneers in the field of sociology in order to develop a much-

needed anarchist approach to sociology. The section concludes with Jon Bekken's study of Kropotkin's ideas and their relevance to contemporary manifestations of anarchism.

Part Two is concerned with the historical analysis of anarchism *vis-à-vis* the formulation of new theoretical frameworks and methodologies. While focusing chiefly on the *fin-de-siècle*, the chapters in this section explore the diversity and cosmopolitanism of the classical anarchist movement as it existed in different geographical regions. The section begins with a study of identity construction within the Swiss anarchist movement with particular attention to print culture. In the next chapter, Puerto Rican anarchist discourse is analyzed through the lens of its literary production in order to demonstrate how anarchists created an unique radical narrative in the context of their immediate historical reality. Another chapter presents a novel methodology for outlining the networks created by the *Galleanisti* of New England. The final chapter of the section focuses on the anarchist aesthetic and its materialization through anarchist practices, including the creation of anarchist spaces.

Part Three highlights the enormous importance of anarchist aesthetics through analyses of its cultural and artistic production, as well as of the representation of anarchism in the media. The first chapter focuses on the representation of the body in propaganda posters during the Spanish Civil War. This is followed by a critique of Cornelius Cardew's book, *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, from the standpoint of anarchist epistemology. Another chapter discusses anarchist media in the United States and questions the effectiveness of the Internet as a way to spread ideas outside of the anarchist milieu. This is followed by a proposal to abolish copyrights along with suggested alternatives. The section concludes with an anthropological analysis of material culture inside contemporary anarchist circles and presents a theoretical model structured for this task.

Part Four focuses on the spiritual, religious, and the ethical. Two of the chapters will discuss spiritualism from the standpoint of the Puerto Rican anarchist and activist Luisa Capetillo. There is also a chapter on the relation between Christianity and anarchism. The section concludes with a chapter that develops an analysis of the capability of anarchism to create a coherent ethical and moral system based on complete individual freedom in a social context.

Part Five is dedicated to anarchist praxis in contemporary struggles. Three of the chapters in this section are concerned with animal liberation. Each articulates problems and critical appraisals of proposed solutions to these problems. Another chapter discusses pedagogical projects loosely

based on anarchist ideals. Another chapter looks at the influence of anarchist and libertarian ideas in the *Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores*. The book concludes with a chapter examining the relation between anarchist theory and national liberation struggles.

## Notes

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1. Christian Ferrer, *Cabezas de tormenta* (Buenos Aires: Utopía Libertaria, 2004), p. 65. Our translation.
2. Maia Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011), p. 258.
3. Quoted in Francisco José Cuevas Noa, *Anarquismo y educación: La propuesta sociopolítica de la pedagogía libertaria* (Madrid: Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2003), p. 19. Our translation.
4. Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), p. 671.
5. Colloquially known as the Zapatistas.
6. David Graeber, “Anarchism, Academia, and the Avant-Garde” in *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, ed. R. Amster, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 105.
7. Murray Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 1999) p. 161.

**PART ONE:**  
**THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY**



## CHAPTER ONE

# A SOCIETY IN REVOLT OR UNDER ANALYSIS? INVESTIGATING THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ANARCHISTS AND SOCIOLOGISTS

DANA M. WILLIAMS

Unlike Marxism and feminism—originally, two non-sociological traditions that have now greatly influenced sociology—anarchism has yet to leave a comparable mark upon the field of sociology. Marxism and feminism have contributed to sociology's theoretical modeling power, topical focus, and even methodology. Indeed, it would be difficult to conceive of academic courses on contemporary sociological theory, social stratification, the family, or gender without explicit reference to these traditions. Anarchism's contributions to social theory have not—even abstractly—found their way into such courses, although it is not difficult to imagine how such a synthesis could begin. Why have Marxism and feminism been brought into the sociological canon (despite their generally un-scientific orientations), but not anarchism? The absence of anarchism within the discipline of sociology is an issue worthy of attention and deserving of an answer.

This chapter argues that anarchism and sociology have a more complicated history than most would initially assume and that, more specifically, anarchism has been excluded from academic sociology, to the detriment of the latter.

This thesis is explored by first considering the crisis and changes taking place within sociology, and the long-term context in which both anarchism and sociology have matured. To address this complicated history requires an in-depth exposition of how anarchists have viewed sociology and how sociologists have viewed anarchism. Despite the occasional compatibilities that emerge from this history, it is clear that professional sociology has held anarchism at “arm's length,” excluding its influence from

the sociological canon. Much of this conflict seems to revolve around the nature and utility of the state: academic sociology and the state work to complement each other, while anarchism questions the very legitimacy of the state. This chapter concludes by re-writing the usual understanding of how anarchism and sociology relate to each other, suggesting a way forward for future theorizing and action.

I begin with the assumption that sociology can learn something important from anarchism. An anarchist-sociology theoretical synthesis could be as simple as incorporating anarchist thinkers into the sociological canon: for example, treating Mikhail Bakunin as a political sociologist, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon as an organizational sociologist, or Peter Kropotkin as a socio-biologist. Alternatively, anarchist concepts could be wedded to sociological notions; for example, “mutual aid” could be associated with Durkheim’s understandings of solidarity or anarchist critiques of authority could appear alongside Weber’s famous three-part typology. Anarchism and sociology could even be blended together into an anarchist-sociology that combines attributes from each tradition, creating something unique. As in the cases of Marxist or feminist sociology, an anarchist-sociology would not be strictly anarchist or strictly sociological, but instead greater than the sum of its parts.

As academic as all this sounds, the task of articulating an anarchist-sociology may have a rather pressing character, too. American sociology, in particular, has wracked itself with self-analysis and introspection over its professional mission (to serve “science,” to serve “society,” or to serve itself?). Much of this recent debate has fallen under the purview of “public sociology,”<sup>1</sup> but also under other guises, like “liberation sociology.”<sup>2</sup> In all of these debates, many point out that not only should sociology aim to achieve a better, juster and egalitarian, and freer society, but that much of the discipline has *always* aimed to achieve this.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the appeal of Marxism and feminism to sociologists is evident: both traditions are critical social philosophies that also share activist sensibilities. Here also lies the true relevance of anarchism to the discipline of sociology: anarchism is a radical praxis that was and still is an active force for social change. However, academia has resisted the incorporation of anarchism more strenuously than Marxism and feminism.<sup>4</sup> It is an appropriate moment in sociology’s history to consider not only the substantial leaps in anarchist thinking in recent decades, but also the relevance of anarchism’s activist-intellectual past (the focus of this chapter).

According to Kivisto, the placement of certain theories or thinkers within the sociological canon over the span of the discipline’s history is based on a variety of factors. The “canon” itself is a social construction

that changes over time and inclusion within it can occur in a haphazard fashion. Even so, “it is clear that influential and well-positioned sociological elites play a key role in making these determinations, acting as brokers.”<sup>5</sup> For a long time in sociology’s history, the role of “professional sociology” or “pure sociology” has reigned supreme. An almost studious avoidance of the political consequences of sociological knowledge dominates the agendas of social research and college teaching alike. Not all sociologists were apolitical, but most had a pro-system and pro-state orientation. A minority of prominent critical voices can be found in the early years of sociology, but their words and political conclusions are usually muffled or ignored.<sup>6</sup> It is crucial to confront contention and to give critics and gadflies their fair say. In this respect, one of sociology’s most important, immediate, and intimate traditions is anarchism.

At earlier periods in their respective histories, the philosophy of anarchism and the discipline of sociology have had strong repulsion, cross-fertilization, respect and critique, and overlap. Anarchists and sociologists underwent an intense period of interaction and undoubtedly influenced each other. Although anarchism and sociology have not arisen from the same exact root origins, they have influenced each other sporadically and via a few central “blood ties”—individuals for whom the boundaries between anarchist and sociologist were not as rigid. The purpose of this paper is to explore these historical connections and to tease out the cause for their contemporary, mutual avoidance.

For well over a century, anarchists have been routinely portrayed by the mass media—this was a particularly potent frame in the US—as violent deviants that crave chaos.<sup>7</sup> Curiously, this portrayal does not match the view most anarchists have of themselves. Instead, anarchists have generally claimed to prioritize self-management, solidarity, decentralization, and anti-authoritarianism,<sup>8</sup> and have not been vocal advocates of chaos, terrorism, or violence any more than adherents of a wide-range of other philosophies (including republicanism, fascism, socialism, neo-liberalism, etcetera). At heart, anarchism is a radical social philosophy and a political movement against the state, capitalism, party-led socialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and other hierarchical institutions. Anarchists’ self-perception has only rarely penetrated into official narratives about anarchism, whether in the media, popular opinion, or academia. But what of sociologists, who share a common interest with anarchists in “society”? Do sociologists see anarchists more accurately, and if so, what is their history together?

A history of anarchism’s interaction with sociology must be an incomplete one. Some anarchists and sociologists were undoubtedly good

friends, while others surely cursed each other under their breath, but never did so on paper or within anyone else's earshot. Even still, a distinct picture emerges from the written, historical record: anarchists and sociologists have had more serious things to say to and about each other than has been previously assumed by scholars of either tradition. This chapter makes the case for the need to direct more attention toward these two groups of social thinkers and their mutual evolution.

Before unearthing an "anarchist-sociology" history, it is crucial to place anarchism and sociology in their appropriate contexts. From the perspective of its adherents, anarchism is a radical philosophy with an orientation towards prefiguration and social transformation. To its practitioners, sociology is an expansive science, with a preference towards critical thinking about society. Sociology's focus on the amelioration of social problems was removed from the discipline (and transplanted to the newly-formed field of social work) by the early 1900s, at which point it became more conservative and reformist.<sup>9</sup> Needless to say, while both anarchism and sociology were and are concerned with "society," the former is a philosophy and social movement premised upon revolutionary praxis, while the latter is best characterized as an academic discipline that has a scientific and institutionalized epistemology and ontology. However, this "objective" summary of each tradition overlooks incredible amounts of subjectivity originating from one or the other. A given anarchist's (or sociologist's) perceptions of the other are just as likely to be inaccurate as accurate, uninformed as informed, conventional as unconventional, or even boring as opposed to interesting in respect to this chapter's central question.<sup>10</sup>

Even given their different social spaces (the frontiers of radical change versus the academy), both anarchism and sociology still emerged at roughly the same time period in Enlightenment-era Europe. All the accompanying phenomena and events of that time impacted anarchism and sociology (albeit differently), including classical liberalism, the democratic revolutions (especially the French Revolution), positivism, Darwinism, and the rise of industrialism out of feudalism.<sup>11</sup> Although separate from each other, anarchism and sociology developed during the same era of change. The most recent developments in sociology—the incorporation of Marxism and feminism—are constructive developments for a critical sociology, since they complement the desire of many sociologists for praxis and an activist-orientation. Crucially, the qualities that made Marx and feminist theory<sup>12</sup> attractive to Left-leaning sociologists is also present in anarchism.<sup>13</sup>

This chapter considers individuals who lived—but did not necessarily work exclusively—during the nineteenth century. This time period includes the early decades of each tradition (before anarchism was suppressed by the First Red Scare of 1919 and sociology became institutionalized). Many of the thinkers included herein wrote mainly in the twentieth century, even up to and beyond World War I, although they were all born during the nineteenth century. Having lived during the nineteenth century not only sets conditions for a bounded time-period, but also helps to encapsulate a particular era.<sup>14</sup> (See the Appendix for greater description of this chapter’s methodology.)

The central analysis of the chapter is focused upon a direct comparison between both traditions: first, the anarchists’ perceptions and interpretations of sociology, then the sociologists’ view of anarchism. Based on these historical relationships, the reasons for the absence of anarchist theory and anarchists themselves from the sociological canon become readily apparent. Consequently, this paper demonstrates the potential for linking anarchism with sociology in diverse and fruitful ways; for example, the re-invigoration of radical practice, in which sociologically-minded anarchists and anarchist-inclined social scientists can pursue their shared goals of interpreting and transforming societies.

## **The Many Interactions of Anarchists and Sociologists**

The mutual appraisals of anarchists and sociologists reflect a variety of opinions, ranging from hostility and critique to favorability. In some instances, anarchists and sociologists viewed the other with open hostility, considering the others and their ideas to be either incompatible with their own or reprehensible. Many more, however, sought to engage in a serious (and likely fair) critique of the other, seeing many things worthy of discussion. Some ideas of the other were agreeable, but others were not. In a few instances, there was warm appreciation for and favorable conclusions drawn about the other. In these cases, common ground or agreement was reached, and personal relationships even developed. The wide spectrum of opinion and interaction is readily apparent from the following examples. A noticeable ambiguity or sloppiness is sometimes on display from both anarchists and sociologists, who occasionally—in the case of the anarchists—conflate “sociology” with socialism or mere social analysis or—in the case of the sociologists—use “anarchism” to refer variously to a movement, an attitude, or disorder. These patterns of subjectivity are themselves revealing and will be discussed later.

## The Anarchists Talk About Sociology

The main characteristics of sociology that repelled anarchists were related to what anarchists perceived as sociology's core assumptions. For example, Peter Kropotkin argued that sociology treats the state as a given, assuming that there is no world outside it (or at least no world worth knowing about).<sup>15</sup> As such, something that is in fact socially-constructed—like the all-pervasive and seemingly irreplaceable state—do not deserve such an easy critique from sociologists, but instead warrant a strenuous challenge. Thus Bakunin,<sup>16</sup> a collectivist and “father of anarchism,” associated sociology with Marx and Engels (as did later sociologists, too), who Bakunin concluded did not see any inherent problems with the state.<sup>17</sup> Such criticisms underline an essential critique of state power, and the anarchists saw academia in general and sociology in particular as helping the state to exercise that power.<sup>18</sup>

Likewise, Alexander Berkman felt that sociologists tended to disregard the opinions and ideas of non-intellectuals. “Learned men have written big books, many of them on sociology, psychology, and many other ‘ologies,’ to tell you what you want, but no two of those books ever agree. And yet I think that you know very well without them what you want.”<sup>19</sup> Of particular concern for Berkman was the tendency for individuals to get lost in sociology's analysis and for this to result in the normalization of the suffering of some individuals in society:

And they have at last come to the conclusion that you, my friend, don't count at all. What's important, they say, is not you, but “the whole,” all the people together. This “whole” they call “society,” “the commonwealth,” or “the State,” and the wiseacres have actually decided that it makes no difference if you, the individual, are miserable so long as “society” is all right. Somehow they forget to explain how “society” or “the whole” can be all right if the single members of it are wretched.<sup>20</sup>

Berkman's critique is certainly directed at what today is called “structural functionalism,” but his words can still find resonance in the social distance often desired by sociologists from individual people. These anarchist conclusions regarding sociology's desire to remain holistic and objective are best summed-up by the Italian electrician and revolutionary anarchist Errico Malatesta, who concluded that sociologists have no practical program for society and “are concerned only with establishing the truth. They seek knowledge, they are not seeking to do something,” whereas anarchism, a non-science, was completely interested in programs and projects *for* society.<sup>21</sup> However, despite sociology's pretensions, the mystic anar-

chist Landauer stressed that it is not an “exact science” (a fact he was content with) and that something like “revolution” could not, thankfully, be studied via science.<sup>22</sup>

Auguste Comte, the coiner of the term “sociology,” was considered an important figure by anarchists. The anarchist who most interacted with Comte was Proudhon, who attended an 1848 lecture by Comte on the “history of humanity.” Although Proudhon praised parts of the lecture, he thought it was filled with “idle chatter and contradictions,” called Comte a “crazy” “old driveller,” and considered Comte’s justifications of inequality to be “stupid.”<sup>23</sup> A few years later, however, Comte approached Proudhon (and other leftists, including Auguste Blanqui) to join him in his positivist mission. The two thinkers had copies of their books sent to each other; they read each other’s writings (although Proudhon doubted Comte would read his work), and carried on a long-distance correspondence. In order to attract Proudhon, Comte used flattery, praising Proudhon’s spontaneity, verve, and originality. Proudhon both accepted the label “positivist” and rejected it at different times, but he remained consistently cynical about Comte’s objectives. Comte’s ideas about “cerebral hygiene” were ridiculous to Proudhon, and Proudhon criticized Comte’s inaccessibility and writing style. More viciously, Proudhon referred to Comte as “the most pedantic of scholars, the poorest of philosophers, the dumbest of socialists, the most intolerable of writers.”<sup>24</sup> Both thought the other lacked a sufficiently scientific background, and it was clear that their relationship was a collision of substantial egos—although Comte, with his “cerebral hygiene” philosophy, was more adverse to fair dialogue than Proudhon. Still, there was a lot of overlap between the two thinkers: rejection of traditional religion, support of republicanism, sympathy for the working classes, interest in a more cooperative and decentralized society, and their general anti-feminism. When Comte died in 1857, Proudhon was the only contemporary thinker to attend the funeral.<sup>25</sup>

Bakunin was also a thorough reader of Comte; in fact, a biographer of Bakunin once claimed that Comte “was the chief intellectual influence on Bakunin’s last decade.”<sup>26</sup> Comte was considered by Bakunin to be “the true father of modern scientific anarchism.”<sup>27</sup> McLaughlin points to a number of goals shared by both Bakunin and Comte, including the unification of scientific knowledge, the “recasting” of the European education system for the modern era, and their desire for successful social reorganization (i.e., Comte wanted a closure to revolution, while Bakunin—at least once becoming an anarchist—sought the non-closure of revolutionary action).

While anarchists tended to like Comte's scientific approach—for example, the Russian anarchist-count Leo Tolstoy thought sociology could be based upon biology as a “positive science” and thereby reveal the “laws of humanity”—many thought Comte took his positivism too far. Bakunin felt positivism was ultimately too deterministic and that it ruled out choice.<sup>28</sup> Even though the anarchist geographer Élisée Reclus taught at a positivist-influenced university and admired Comte's appreciation for history, he still did not like Comtean positivism.<sup>29</sup> What bothered anarchists most about positivism was Comte's elevation of sociology to a “religion of humanity.”<sup>30</sup> Kropotkin considered Comte's “moral principle” to be too religious and concluded that Comte was requesting nothing short of “worship.”<sup>31</sup> Kropotkin<sup>32</sup> also thought that sociology overlooked the regular and common mutual aid in people's private lives, since most mutual aid took place in friendships and families, and not in “public.”<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the sociological conclusions of the time that considered inequality and competition to be “natural” phenomena or “laws” of humanity were wholly untested claims in Kropotkin's estimation. Such propositions were merely the “guesswork” of “middle-class sociology.”<sup>34</sup>

An early sociologist commonly read by anarchists was Herbert Spencer. In fact, Spencer may have been one of the most widely read by nineteenth-century anarchists, including many famous figures like Emma Goldman,<sup>35</sup> Bartolomeo Vanzetti (and many other Italian anarchists),<sup>36</sup> Peter Kropotkin, and Benjamin Tucker. The work that put Spencer on the anarchists' radar was his essay “The Right to Ignore the State” (published in *Social Statistics*, 1851). In his appraisal of Spencer's early work, Kropotkin felt Spencer's writing contained many anarchist ideas.<sup>37</sup> This interpretation inspired Kropotkin (along with his brother) to translate Spencer's *Principles of Biology*, which is perhaps why Spencer later signed a petition that demanded Kropotkin's early release from prison after his conviction at Lyons in 1883.<sup>38</sup> Still, Kropotkin often disagreed personally with Spencer; he claimed that Spencer misunderstood both Darwin and mutual aid, and he argued that Spencer's social Darwinism (i.e., “survival of the fittest”) was premised upon faulty method and reasoning.<sup>39</sup> For example, Kropotkin felt that Spencer misused the strategy of applying analogies to social life based on physical phenomenon, that he was Western-centric and unable to appreciate cultural diversity in other societies, and that he misinterpreted “the struggle for existence” to refer to competition *within* species as opposed to simply between species.<sup>40</sup>

Tucker, who was also influenced by Spencer and was one of the main distributors of Spencer's writings to American anarchists through his newspaper *Liberty*, still found Spencer's sociological implications to be

under-specified.<sup>41</sup> Spencer's later work was also used, incorrectly from Tucker's perspective, by state-socialists to justify the state's existence.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, Spencer is seen as a libertarian thinker who wanted reduced state intervention, but not as an anarchist.<sup>43</sup>

Despite their critiques, many anarchists had very positive appraisals of sociology. For example, the American anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre came to identify as an anarchist via her study of sociology. De Cleyre recalled her political transformation stemming from being personally and intellectually challenged by an anarchist she met, an encounter which led her to an in-depth study of what she called "the principles of sociology" (along with anarchism and socialism).<sup>44</sup> The Spanish anarchist educator and founder of the Modern School Francisco Ferrer was interested in and committed to spreading an understanding of science and sociology "for the millions."<sup>45</sup> Emma Goldman, who later in life entered into a romantic relationship with sociologist Frank Heiner,<sup>46</sup> stated that sociology shows that human nature is plastic and can change.<sup>47</sup> As an advocate of women's rights and birth control, she saw sociology (along with economics and other sciences) as the philosophical supporters of a world-wide movement for birth-control.<sup>48</sup> Kropotkin felt that all sciences could be taught to children before the age of twelve, but not sociology, implying that it required a more advanced mind.<sup>49</sup> Incidentally, contributors to Goldman's *Mother Earth* magazine regularly referred to Kropotkin himself as a "sociologist."<sup>50</sup> His important 1908 work, *Modern Science and Anarchism*, contained an in-depth study of Comte, Spencer, and others, and can be seen as Kropotkin's defining contribution to sociology.

Tucker even alleged that William Graham Sumner, the first American professor of sociology, refused to acknowledge that "Anarchistic Socialists are the most unflinching champions in existence of his own pet principle of laissez faire." Consequently, Tucker demanded that Sumner admit that he favored anarchism.<sup>51</sup> Regrettably, as radical activists that usually lacked formal academic positions due to deliberate exclusion—as well as spending many years of their careers in prison or exile—anarchists simply had less privilege and opportunity to write much about sociology. Anarchists' disadvantages are best illustrated by the numerous anti-anarchist laws that essentially criminalized anarchist beliefs and affiliation during the late-1800s and early-1900s (e.g. the Anarchist Exclusion Act of 1903 in the US and the *lois scélérates* laws of 1893 in France).

## The Sociologists Talk About Anarchism

The sociologists' view of anarchists was comparable to the views that anarchists had of sociology: some disliked it, many critiqued it, and a few thought the anarchists were important and sound thinkers. Harney sums up the mainstream thinking of nineteenth-century sociologists when he writes that "Durkheim, Weber, [and] Simmel feared anarchism as both a political movement and rival analysis, and they suppressed that fear."<sup>52</sup> Many sociologists, such as Comte,<sup>53</sup> used the term "anarchy" as it was regularly used by authorities to designate chaos; thus, anarchy referred to a lack of order and existed (hopefully temporarily) during transitional periods following disequilibrium, such as the French Revolution. Few summed up the sociologists' repulsion from anarchism more vividly than Gustave LeBon, in his popular work *The Crowd*, where he calls anarchists the "worst enemies of society."<sup>54</sup> LeBon also critiqued mass education, in part, since it was allegedly used to train people to become anarchists.<sup>55</sup> Even W.E.B. DuBois, generally familiar with anarcho-syndicalism,<sup>56</sup> confused "anarchy" with chaos.<sup>57</sup>

Karl Marx had a strong—and well-known—animosity towards anarchists, including fellow Young Hegelian Max Stirner, whom Marx excoriated at great length in his *German Ideology*.<sup>58</sup> Marx also mocked Proudhon—particularly the latter's *The Philosophy of Poverty*—in his polemic *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Earlier, Marx had noted his admiration for Proudhon and stated that Proudhon convinced him of the necessity of abolishing private property. Curiously, it is Marx's eventual dislike for anarchist comrades and numerous written attacks on them that immortalized anarchist critiques and spread them (through Marxian eyes) to wider audiences.<sup>59</sup> Marx's greatest anarchist enemy, however, was Mikhail Bakunin. They were initially comrades: for example, Bakunin translated the first Russian version of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1863<sup>60</sup> and was contracted to be the Russian translator of Marx's *Das Capital*, although he never finished the job. Even so, the two later traded insults and accusations, including Marx's claim that Bakunin was a spy for the Czar. The influence of Proudhon's followers in the European labor movement eventually led to conflict within the First International, culminating in a confrontation between Bakunin and Marx. Bakunin and the anarchists were expelled from the International, leading to bitter distrust for generations between Marxists and anarchists.<sup>61</sup> According to Thomas, Marx saw the anarchists as intellectual rivals and the personality conflicts between Marx and famous anarchists are symptomatic of the real, "pronounced tactical differences" and "fundamental division[s]" between two distinct ideolo-

gies.<sup>62</sup> To the extent that modern sociology has adopted certain Marxian ideas and assumptions, some of that nineteenth-century conflict between Marx and anarchists has been absorbed into sociology, as is evident, for example, in many sociologists' reification of the state and their taking for granted the merits of working "inside the system" for social change (or, as in Marx's case, the emphasis upon social democrat parties).

Other sociologists have been less antagonistic with their criticisms, although they repeated many stereotypes and inaccurate caricatures of anarchist ideas. Many such critics saw anarchism as foolish. For example, Charles Horton Cooley, best remembered today for his looking-glass self theory, wrote that anarchism was "childish," that it "would benefit no one, only criminals," and that general strikes were unlikely to be pursued by the "more sober and hardheaded leaders of the labor movement."<sup>63</sup> Likewise, Max Weber referred to Bakunin's ideas as "naïve"<sup>64</sup> and testified at the trial of an anarchist named Ernst Toller (a member of the defeated Bavarian Soviet following WWI), stating that although Toller had "an entirely upright character," he still possessed "confused views."<sup>65</sup> However, unlike many other sociologists, Weber did not completely dismiss anarchism out-of-hand, as is shown later.

Albion Small, the founder of the University of Chicago's sociology department, insinuated that anarchy was analogous to the chaotic French Revolution and was a destructive tendency (while concurrently and clearly identifying sociology itself as "constructive").<sup>66</sup> Small also argued that anarchists incorrectly assumed that most people can be "social" without laws regulating their behavior.<sup>67</sup> Georg Simmel was even more cynical about an egalitarian, non-law-based social order, writing that

The technique of civilized labor requires for its perfection a hierarchical structure of society, "one mind for a thousand hands," a system of leaders and executors. The constitution of individuals and the claims of objective achievement, as well as the workers and the realization of their aims—all coincide in the necessity of domination and subordination.<sup>68</sup>

From Simmel's perspective, anarchists ignore "functional relationships" between individuals and groups;<sup>69</sup> anarchy itself is a "sociological error," since freedom and domination will never be able to exist in "pure" forms in a society.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Simmel claims that "super- and subordination in all its possible forms is now the technical pre-condition for society accomplishing its goals."<sup>71</sup> As such, Karl Mannheim, the sociologist of knowledge, criticized anarchism in general and Gustav Landauer in particular for possessing a "tendency towards simplification" that blurred all

differences between “libertarian” and “authoritarian,” thus ignoring varied state forms.<sup>72</sup>

While generally sympathetic to anarchism, Pitirim Sorokin wrote about the culmination of revolutionary activity that displaces authority and leads to “anarchism.” In such periods of limitless freedom, many problems emerge, making life “insufferably difficult, nearly unbearable.” Sorokin claimed that new authorities must soon establish themselves after revolution: “unless new reflexes of obedience be inculcated[,] society begins to perish.”<sup>73</sup>

Lester Ward, the American Sociological Society’s first president, considered anarchism to be unnecessary for the working classes, since the “present machinery of government, especially in this country, is all they could wish”—they simply needed to assert their rights and start directing government.<sup>74</sup> For his part, Durkheim—adopting Comte’s view<sup>75</sup>—seemed to express sympathy with Engels’ claim that the state would eventually “wither away” after revolution (thus making anarchism quite unnecessary), and that such a socialism was obviously democratic in character. Consequently, Durkheim concluded that Proudhon’s mutualism pushed individualism “to its most paradoxical consequences,” since socialism itself was derived from revolutionary individualism.<sup>76</sup>

Likewise, the famous scholar of inequality, Vilfredo Pareto, made sweeping statements about anarchism, including it in a lengthy, diverse list of doctrines—“Communism, collectivism, protectionism, [...] ‘pulpit’ socialism, bourgeois socialism, anti-Semitism, nihilism”—which were drawn from the same irrational passions. Taken to its logical conclusions, Pareto felt anarchism would lead people to destroy every possible social institution and human practice, causing people to starve to death, since even “food itself, by its abuse, is capable of engendering all manner of evils.”<sup>77</sup> Pareto even later considered his former hero and influence Proudhon ethically *biased* (towards “justice”<sup>78</sup>) and thought Tolstoy’s pacifism was tautological in character.<sup>79</sup> Curiously, one might assume Pareto would have greater sympathies for anarchists, given that his first wife was Dina Bakunin, a relative of Mikhail Bakunin.<sup>80</sup>

There were a surprising number of sociologists who either admired anarchist ideas or who knew anarchists personally. To take the earliest possible point of overlap—although little is known about their personal interaction—Flint notes, in 1894, that Comte shared decentralist views with Proudhon’s decentralist values, but Comte was not convinced of the merits of decentralization down to the commune-level, as Proudhon was. DuBois’s discussion of a “Black general strike” in the American south is clearly indebted to the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism he likely encountered

as a member of the Socialist Party.<sup>81</sup> Weber's colleague Robert Michels self-identified early in life as a "syndicalist" (although later in life he turned towards Italian fascism). In his famous work *Political Parties*, Michels coined the term "iron law of oligarchy," and discussed anarchism in-depth, referring to it as a "prophylactic" against such oligarchy. The avoidance of individual power and organizational resources helped anarchists to stymie the authoritarian tendencies of all influential leaders.<sup>82</sup>

Although Robert Park—a co-founder of the Chicago School—thought anarchism seemed "black and pestilent," he concluded "it contains within it the germ of an idea that is the salvation of the world."<sup>83</sup> Park's favorable views likely derived from his encounters with a number of anarchists during his stint in Detroit, including one who helped Park with his German translations.<sup>84</sup> Jane Addams was also well-acquainted with anarchists in Chicago. Addams, who today is best known as a founder of social work, was also a co-founder of the American Sociological Society, an author for the *American Journal of Sociology*, was personally invited by Albion Small to be a faculty member at the University of Chicago (she declined), and is a pivotal figure in what today is amorphously known as "applied sociology." Addams was the 1901 host for Kropotkin's lecture tour visit to Chicago,<sup>85</sup> and—although no notes from the meeting exist—it is easy to imagine that the two had much to talk about (Eddy postulates that some of their common interests, including Darwin, morality, and progress, may have been discussion topics for Kropotkin and Addams<sup>86</sup>). She also went out of her way to help an arrested anarchist publisher, even lobbying the mayor of Chicago on his behalf, getting the mayor's permission to visit the publisher in his cell, pressuring until the man's lawyer could see him, and eventually getting him released.<sup>87</sup> Anarchists were also a fixture at Addams's Hull House, where she encouraged some of them to be union organizers among poor immigrants in Chicago.<sup>88</sup>

Thorstein Veblen, perhaps best known as the sociologist who described "conspicuous consumption," was a supporter of the Industrial Workers of the World and is considered, at least by some, such as Dugger, to be an anarchist, due to his holding localist, anti-capitalist values and demonstrating "no faith in the ability of the current businesspeople's state to reform the economy."<sup>89</sup> Lester Ward was also considered by some (although erroneously) as sympathetic to anarchism, advocating that "society govern itself and get rid of all its plutocratic masters."<sup>90</sup> Ward was regularly approached by leftist activists to speak on their behalf, and he even shared "speakers' tables with Emma Goldman."<sup>91</sup> Even though skeptical about anarchism, Ward sympathized with some of its views; for example, he agreed with Francisco Ferrer's position on education and knowledge,

which had the possibility to “regenerate the world,” stating that Ferrer’s execution by Spanish authorities in 1909 indicated that “civilization has been assassinated.”<sup>92</sup>

Durkheim also had some distant admiration for certain anarchists, particularly Proudhon; Proudhon can be seen as a sociological predecessor to Durkheim.<sup>93</sup> In fact, Durkheim drafted lectures on Proudhon for 1896-1897 that he was never to deliver, because he instead founded his journal *L’Année Sociologique* and re-focused his efforts on pure sociology.<sup>94</sup> Thus, Durkheim’s study on socialism remains incomplete, but, according to Pearce, in Durkheim’s writings one can detect the echo of Proudhon’s thoughts, such as their shared “critique of the effect on society of inherited wealth” and the belief “that limits should be placed on the role of the state.”<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps the professional sociologist with the closest relationship to anarchism was Pitirim Sorokin, the founder of Harvard’s sociology department. As a youth in Russia, Sorokin was exposed to anarchist literature and was a member of the Social Revolutionaries (a non-anarchist party with some anarchist influences).<sup>96</sup> Later, he met and befriended Kropotkin in 1917, before moving to the United States. Jaworski argues that Sorokin took with him anarchist values like “individualism, creativity, cooperation, mutual aid, and love” and he sought to “place anarchism on a scientific footing.”<sup>97</sup> Well-known for his ideas on social altruism, Sorokin’s intellectual debt to Kropotkin and *Mutual Aid* is clear. Sorokin also listed Proudhon numerous times in his *Sociological Theories of Today*, alongside luminaries like Fichte, Marx, Plato, and Sartre, although he never treats Proudhon’s ideas directly or separately. Sorokin even identified as an anarchist of sorts, calling himself a “conservative Christian anarchist.”<sup>98</sup>

Weber had both a critical engagement with anarchist ideas, as well as with certain anarchists. Weber often wrote approvingly of Tolstoy,<sup>99</sup> referring to the absence of force in the pacifist ideal as anarchist in nature.<sup>100</sup> According to Weber, such religious anarchism tended to be short-lasting, due to the ephemeral character of charisma.<sup>101</sup> Weber had a personal sympathy for anarchists, but thought them to be generally unrealistic. Unlike some of the contemporary liberals, Weber considered anarchists to have an important viewpoint that was often worth considering. Thus, even though anarchists reject the validity of legal mandates,

[a]n anarchist can certainly be a good legal scholar. And if he is, then it may be precisely that Archimedean point, as it were, outside the conventions and assumptions which seem to us so self-evident, at which his objective convictions (if they are genuine) place him, which equips him to recognise, in the axioms of conventional legal theory, certain fundamen-

tal problems which escape the notice of those who take them all too easily for granted. For the most radical doubt is the father of knowledge.<sup>102</sup>

Weber was personally acquainted with the anarchist historian Max Nettlau<sup>103</sup> and other anarchists with whom he sometimes vacationed in Ascona.<sup>104</sup> He was “impressed by their refusal to compromise”<sup>105</sup> and considered them “honest and straightforward.”<sup>106</sup> Weber’s attraction to anarchists—while still holding their ideas at arm’s length from his own—illustrates what Mommsen identifies as Weber’s desire to seek out radical ideas, perhaps as an alter ego to his own.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, perhaps the best bridge between anarchism and sociology was via Martin Buber. A student of the sociologist Simmel and an admirer of Ferdinand Tönnies, Buber was a philosopher heavily influenced by Proudhon and Kropotkin who also became a “close friend and associate” of Landauer.<sup>108</sup> In fact, while Simmel encouraged Buber’s nationalism prior to World War I, Buber eventually turned away from patriotism and the war due to Landauer’s intervention.<sup>109</sup> In accordance with the aforementioned intellectual influences, Buber synthesized anarchism and sociology into a unique and compelling hybrid. Buber became an influential figure in the socialist Zionist movement in Palestine<sup>110</sup> and was the author of the prefigurative anarchist work—that can and should be read sociologically—*Paths in Utopia*.<sup>111</sup>

## The Exclusion of Anarchists From Sociology

As described above, the nineteenth century is filled with both predictable and surprising relationships between anarchists and sociologists. However, the history presented in this chapter also lends considerable insight to the reasons for the anarchist absence within the sociological canon. Two conceptual explanations for the absence of anarchists can be adapted from the geographical theory of push-pull factors. In this instance, a type of reverse push-pull occurred: anarchists refusing to enter the academy, and the discipline of sociology, individual sociologists, and other elites preventing anarchists access to the academy.

There is not as much direct evidence to indicate reasons why anarchists chose not to enter the academy. It is possible to extrapolate from Berkman’s criticisms<sup>112</sup> that academic professions were perhaps unnecessary, maybe even foolish. Why pursue an academic career if social revolution is both a more practical and pressing concern? Berkman, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and others were worried—not without reason—that sociology

was in the process of directing its efforts towards uses that would primarily aid and strengthen the state.

Anarchists also kept themselves at arm's length from the academy, even when they sympathized with part of its mission. Kropotkin and Reclus, two individuals who spent a fair amount of time in universities (as geographers), found themselves unwilling to compromise their politics. In Kropotkin's case, in 1896 he was informally offered a professor position at Cambridge University—on the expectation that he tone down his radical politics—but he politely declined.<sup>113</sup> This well-known example suggests that some anarchists may have deliberately avoided incorporation into academia, perhaps to avoid the suppression of radical politics to which Marxism and feminism were later subjected during their incorporation. If the academy represented (and still represents) elite and statist interests, then anarchists' conscious attempt to avoid incorporation into the academy can be understood as principled action. Clearly, anarchists were radicals and sociologists were generally liberals; these political differences made sociologists infinitely more acceptable within the nineteenth-century university (For example, recall Simmel's belief that domination and subordination are essential.<sup>114</sup>) In addition to the refusal by some to curtail their values in the face of the academy's stodginess, most anarchists simply lacked financial and social access, given their working-class origins. Despite many anarchists developing "organic intellectual" qualities, those who wrote the most in the movement tended to be disproportionately of middle-class (or even more privileged) backgrounds.

The academy during this time period also worked to exclude most non-elites, including women, minorities and non-Europeans, and others. Of course, radicals such as anarchists were targets for political reasons beyond the elite-exclusionary intentions towards those who were not well-to-do White men. Germany's anti-socialist laws targeted the Social Democratic Party, but were also applied to all other Leftwing radicals.<sup>115</sup> In France, the *lois scélérates* (or villainous laws) criminalized the free speech of anarchists, thereby restricting them from universities. Mass media's anti-anarchist propaganda, which portrayed real or alleged anarchist violence as disruptive and inappropriate for society (and thus the academy), supported and justified such laws.

But most factors that inhibited anarchism's official incorporation into sociology center on sociologists' hostility to anarchists and anarchism. Some of this hostility could have been misplaced, as numerous sociologists referenced anarchism only in passing, with sideways references to "chaos" (e.g., Comte, DuBois, Small), while others minimized and ridiculed it by reducing its diversity to naiveté (Weber), childishness (Cooley),

or impracticality (Simmel). Still others, like LeBon, appeared to have feared anarchism enough to consider it a threat worth warning against. If the only moments in which sociologists felt the need to discuss anarchism were to criticize and lambaste it, the implication for other sociologists would be that anarchist ideas are irrelevant to understanding society. Taken together, these predictable interpretations mirror the superficialities also found in the mass media of the day.<sup>116</sup> The scattered traces referencing anarchism throughout the writings of sociologists illustrate more by their absence than their rare presence; either intentionally or unconsciously, professional sociologists ascribed little value to the ideas of anarchism and, rather than confront whatever worth anarchism might have, simply ignored it. Not coincidentally, in the few instances that sociologists gave serious consideration to anarchism, as Michels did, they discovered a good deal of value and importance in anarchist ideas. And, the intentional distance placed between professional sociologists and anarchist activists is not coincidental; the sociologists most open to anarchist ideas also had the most immediate interaction with actual anarchists (e.g., Park, Sorokin, Addams). Mixing with the anarchist milieu seems to have led to sympathy for anarchism, especially for those sociologists who had additional sympathies for, and who worked on behalf of, disadvantaged populations.

Telling evidence addressing the exclusion of anarchism from the sociological canon may be witnessed in Durkheim's decision to direct his efforts away from an exploration of Proudhon's ideas (as well as Charles Fourier's) towards the creation of his (soon-to-be) premiere, professional sociology journal *L'Année Sociologique*.<sup>117</sup> Thus, Durkheim helped to institutionalize sociology deeper within the academy, as an autonomous discipline. Durkheim's goal was to advance sociology as the social equivalent of modern medicine: able to diagnose "sick" societies and prescribe healthier social arrangements. Durkheim considered the "role" of the statesman to be analogous to "that of the doctor: he forestalls the outbreak of sickness by maintaining good hygiene, or when it does break out, seeks to cure it."<sup>118</sup> Scott notes that European states during the post-Enlightenment period were struggling to make their populations "legible" and therefore undertook massive efforts to gather data.<sup>119</sup> Although Scott does not directly mention it, social science disciplines were logical sources of such data and states thus supported universities accordingly. States during this period deliberately took over privately-controlled educational systems throughout Europe and thereby fashioned such systems to meet the state's needs.<sup>120</sup>

In accepting this role for sociology, Durkheim provided justification for the state's existence, and he also personally served as an advisor to the

Ministry of Education and eventually supported World War I (unlike many other European leftists). Similar to his choice to de-emphasize Proudhon, Durkheim accomplished a comparable end by also minimizing (if not outright eliminating) the presence of women and feminist analysis from sociology.<sup>121</sup> Choosing to avoid Proudhon's ideas, and the debates over the relationship between women and men who emerged from the French Revolution, indicates that Durkheim was far more committed to his positivist study of how society presently functioned than being critical of the social order of his day. Consequently, the simple choice of focus and the attribution of legitimacy made by central scholars like Durkheim can have a "ripple-effect" upon contemporary and future generations of intellectuals.

Since self-identified sociology has generally only existed within the academy, the discipline has tended to support existing society and its institutions. As such, professional sociologists usually had a favorable view of the social status quo and had a material interest in supporting those institutions. Even though anarchists have had a common focus on the same subjects, their perspective has often been in diametric opposition to university-based sociologists. The disinterest in anarchist perspectives by the discipline is telling, given how suited and focused anarchist ideas are for the study of society. However, these same patterns of social science avoidance are not unique to sociology. For example, the field of international relations and its historiography has studiously avoided (or rejected) anarchism. International relations scholar Alex Prichard writes that it is "deeply ironic that despite being quintessentially concerned with anarchy and a world without sovereigns, the anarchists are never canvassed for their opinions by those working on the 'political discourse of anarchy.'"<sup>122</sup> As such, anarchism is contradictory to the "use-value" of academic disciplines that have been designed to serve the interests of the state, capitalism, and other institutions of domination.

Social theory has traditionally only permitted ideas and individuals into the canon who have reinforced the interests of those who are creating that theory: economically-advantaged White males.<sup>123</sup> Although a few anarchists would fall into this category—Bakunin and Kropotkin were born as Russian nobility (although both rejected their titles)—privileged interests are contrary to the goals of anarchists, and therefore, anarchists have been excluded from the canon. Even anarchists from privileged backgrounds gave their support to causes of disadvantaged populations, especially the working-class, as well as other dominated groups, like women, racial and ethnic minorities, and immigrants, but such populations were generally under-theorized by orthodox, academic social theory for most of the same time period. Thus, the (eventual) inclusion of Marxism

and feminism into the sociological canon is interesting, but it also indicates that they possess a certain limited social acceptability to some sectors of the academy—neither are totalizing anti-authoritarian traditions and both have varieties that permit and encourage working within systems of privilege and the liberal state (i.e. social democracy and liberal feminism). Sprague calls for “inclusive conversations among holders of multiple perspectives engaging with one another, negotiating the collective implications of our diverse standpoints”<sup>124</sup>; such an inclusion would require the nullification of “intellectual gatekeeping.”<sup>125</sup> This approach could position anarchism alongside time-tested social theorists, as well as raise the levels of internal disagreement within the canon. This is not necessarily a bad thing and the critical edge of sociology would only be strengthened by such efforts.

## Conclusion

The common view—which treats anarchism and sociology as completely different traditions, emerging out of completely different milieux, environments, or intellectual frameworks—while a compelling one is, in a strict sense, factually inaccurate. Both traditions interacted with each other, during similar time periods. The aforementioned thinkers have been influential beyond their own lives to the traditions of both anarchism and sociology. Consequently, their fraternal relations, even when limited, have undoubtedly led to cross-fertilization. To take one example, Emma Goldman personally knew sociologists and read their work, while she also knew countless influential anarchist figures (see her autobiography *Living My Life*) and she herself had a substantial influence upon subsequent generations of anarchists. It stands to reason that there was cross-fertilization between anarchists and sociologists. If this is true, then to speak of a “pure anarchism” unadulterated by sociology, or a “pure sociology” that never accounted for anarchist critiques, is difficult.<sup>126</sup> However, the general hostility expressed in strong language by critics from each tradition (as seen in the previous section on anarchist exclusion from the academy), illustrates that *overt* influences, properly cited, are largely absent.

Even though it is possible to give definitions for “anarchism” or “sociology,” each definition will, by necessity, be based on certain generalizations, distortions, or assumptions that do not withstand scrutiny. All but the broadest attempts to define anarchism and sociology today will meet with some manner of disagreement from numerous individuals, organizations, or traditions, from each respective corner. Thus, anarchism and sociology may not be opposing traditions that require deliberate efforts, such as this

chapter makes, to contrast one against the other, since both, in fact, emerged from interaction, union, and struggle with each other. However, to approach anarchist-sociology as an already merged, crossbred phenomenon would require a different starting point, that—while worthwhile, legitimate, and important to explore—has not been attempted here. This chapter's historical evidence demonstrates that anarchists and sociologists interacted personally and intellectually, a fact that encourages further research.

The preceding review of the written record—that documents the history of anarchists and sociologists—has been more focused upon each's perception of the other, as opposed to a supposedly “objective” appraisal of how the two overlap. Were the perceptions of each largely accurate from the other's perspective? Sometimes yes, largely no. Anarchists—although often praising the virtues of science—were likely to consider sociologists as insiders with a vested interest in protecting existing institutions, especially the state. Sociologists were most apt to use the popular caricature of “anarchy” offered by the media and other elites, and repeated the time-tested triumvirate of anarchist boogeymen: chaos, violence, and fantasy.

The earliest thinkers of each tradition appear most regularly in this paper's history, especially figures like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Peter Kropotkin, Auguste Comte, and Herbert Spencer. Later thinkers—especially those who lived into the twentieth century, were still referencing classical thinkers alongside contemporaries and even the “rank-and-file.” Perhaps the most exemplary “cross-over” figures of anarchist-sociology were, not surprisingly, those who had university training as well as active public intellectual and activist lives, individuals such as Kropotkin, Addams, and Buber.<sup>127</sup>

Some of this historical evidence is overwhelmingly obvious: some anarchists and sociologists had passionate dislike or admiration for each other. Other evidence is hard to classify—and may be fairly anecdotal or non-representative of the theorists' opinions—as well as complicated (i.e., conditional acceptance or hesitant rejection). While somewhat unsatisfying as conclusions, these findings are reassuringly *real* and appropriately nuanced. It would be a gross generalization to claim that nineteenth-century affairs between these two traditions were either simple or non-existent. Reality is far more complicated and interesting. This chapter indicates that there are numerous areas of overlap between nineteenth-century theorists; presumably, just as many exist today as did during early times, since both anarchism and sociology remain active traditions, unlike previous intellectual movements, such as phrenology (to pick one example).

There are multiple ways to explain the absence of anarchism from the academy in general and the sociological canon in particular. Sociology during the period under study here began to orient its analytical lens towards the purposes of statecraft and interpretation of the status quo, while anarchism sought to uncover the limitations of the present system and to advocate for its overthrow. A notable hypothesis explaining the spread and ascendancy of certain intellectual traditions argues that it is not necessarily due to the strength of ideas or evidence, but rather the dominance and influence of certain individuals who are well-placed within social networks.<sup>128</sup> Thus, Marxists and feminists after the movements of the 1960s who made the “long march through the institutions” helped to influence the trajectory of the discipline,<sup>129</sup> unlike anarchists who were more absent during that period (because they generally stayed within social movements instead). To assimilate into sociology, Marxism and feminism may have had to curtail their more radical critiques or at least silence their activist tendencies in the name of “objectivity.” This possibility, while not guaranteed for anarchism, ought to caution advocates for its inclusion.

If anarchism has begun to enjoy a greater influence within academia today than in previous decades, it may be due to the more visible presence of anarchists within institutions of higher education, who attend graduate school and acquire faculty positions. Although no published studies can confirm a greater percentage of anarchist academics in the English-speaking world today, there are many incidental bits of evidence: for example, the thousands of members and conference participants of the British-based Anarchist Studies Network and of the North American Anarchist Studies Network. Here, anarchist academics are centered in the social sciences and humanities, and have been generating unique analyses and research as of late.<sup>130</sup>

Neither anarchism nor sociology is today what they were in their respective infancies, whether in terms of self-perception or the perception of critics. Anarchism and sociology’s respective definitions and observations of the other might seem ill-informed or inaccurate today—often it is impossible to tell what a particular author meant by a term, since they rarely paused to define it, regularly relied on stereotypes, and were content to talk past authors in other traditions. Curiously (and satisfyingly), both traditions have evolved, matured, and branched out of their former confines.<sup>131</sup> While nineteenth-century universities were attended by elites, many now admit large numbers of middle-class and, in some cases, working-class students. Changing university student demographics demonstrates the merits of re-assessing nineteenth-century anarchists’ hesitation to engage the academy and professional sociology.

This chapter has emphasized what sociology could gain by incorporating anarchism into its theoretical canon, including a critique of the state and general domination,<sup>132</sup> and a militant activist orientation. Potential disadvantages of anarchist incorporation and radicalization may include increased marginalization from funding sources and decreased political support for the discipline. It is also worth considering what anarchism might gain from incorporation. From the standpoint of critical sociology, it is safe to say that sociology is likely to benefit more than anarchism from such a wedding. The fears of earlier anarchist critics may be realized if anarchism pacifies its radical edge, becomes more philosophical than praxis-oriented, or simply feeds academic careers. Still, the advantages for anarchism may include increased “legitimacy” (albeit only in the eyes of some), greater access to recruit at universities, and a closer intellectual debate with other theoretical frameworks (e.g. world-systems analysis, phenomenology, Frankfurt school critical theory, or symbolic interactionism).

Future research into the history of anarchist-sociology ought to seek out more recent interactions among individuals positioned solidly within the twentieth century. For example, some have already begun noting the highly sociological character of widely-read English-language anarchists like Murray Bookchin, Paul Goodman, and Colin Ward. A comparable effort should be made to explore the ideas of equally well-known sociologists, including Herbert Blumer, Daniel Bell, C. Wright Mills, Erving Goffman, and Pierre Bourdieu, who were not only generally sympathetic to and knew a good deal about anarchism, but some of whom actually *identified as anarchists*.<sup>133</sup> Given such realities, the prospects for uncovering a vibrant history of anarchists and sociologists in dialogue are not only realistic goals, but so is a more interesting task: developing a mature and useful anarchist-sociology synthesis itself.

## Appendix

This study includes some subjects who were only later identified as “anarchists” or “sociologists,” such as William Godwin<sup>134</sup> and Max Stirner, or Herbert Spencer and Karl Marx. For example, Marx recoiled at sociology, perhaps due to his dislike of Comtean positivism. Marx more properly viewed himself as creating a science of socialism, not sociology.<sup>135</sup> However, European sociologists have regularly read Marx and North American sociologists have as well, at least since the mid-twentieth century. Berlin makes one such claim, arguing that Marx is the “true father” of modern sociology, more so than Comte or Spencer.<sup>136</sup> Thus, even though taking the above liberties with categorization can produce messy results, it is appropriate given the inclusion of such individual theorists by contemporaries of either tradition. Note that to *only* apply the label of “anarchist” to Proudhon or Bakunin (and ignore other labels like “mutualist” or “collectivist”) or “sociologist” for Marx, Weber, or Simmel (when “socialist,” “political economist,” or “philosopher” would be just as appropriate) is itself epistemologically problematic. Such controversial [re-]definitions are central in other contemporary scholarship, such as the work of Schmidt and van der Walt.<sup>137</sup>

The active domains of individuals featured in this paper are equally wide: included are “philosophical anarchists” (e.g., Benjamin Tucker) as well as “movement anarchists” (e.g., Mikhail Bakunin). Conversely, academic sociologists (like Emile Durkheim and Lester Ward) are discussed alongside sociologists who spent much of their lives outside of universities (e.g., Jane Addams). Figure 1 presents a timeline of notable anarchists and sociologists who lived (however shortly) during the nineteenth century. While not all these individuals are discussed in this paper, Figure 1 clearly demonstrates that well-known anarchists and sociologists lived and worked during the same time period of change, development, and tumult in Europe and North America.

It is not easy determining the crucial individuals to include in a study like this. “Reputable” and vetted anarchist and sociology texts (especially those on theory and history) were used to generate a master-list of potential individuals. If deemed important enough to be featured in the following widely-read works, individuals were then potentially available for inclusion in this chapter. Anarchists from Daniel Guérin’s *No Gods, No Masters* (2005), Paul Eltzbacher’s *The Great Anarchists* (2004), and Peter Marshall’s *Demanding the Impossible* (1992) were of key focus, as were sociologists discussed in Lewis Coser’s *Masters of Sociological Thought* (1971), George Ritzer’s *Sociological Theory* (2008), and Randall Collins’s

*Four Sociological Traditions* (1994). The more important figures from each work were of particular note here, although not all were found to have connections—thus individuals who did not write about the other tradition or talk to each other will not be included in this chapter. Also, a slight preference has been made for key American sociologists and for source materials available in English.

Two primary sources of history were crucial. Whenever possible, the original texts written by the theorists themselves, or secondary sources were used when necessary, particularly from authors who have digested the original thinker's ideas. Relevant sources were subjected to a loose content analysis to identify central themes. Two different types of analysis result from this process: (1) theorists discussing other individual theorists directly, including their thoughts about the other's lives or even their personal relationship with them (theoretical ideas are discussed in-depth insofar as that discussion helps to explain the relationships between anarchists and sociologists), and (2) theorists discussing each other's ideas and theories, and sometimes even an appraisal of the validity of such ideas. This chapter draws upon the perspectives of individual nineteenth-century figures and other commentators. Some readers may suspect a degree of selective handpicking has occurred within the vast literature available; while such error is conceivable, I have attempted to analyze any and all relationships between anarchists and sociologists, and have not consciously omitted inconvenient or contradictory patterns.

This study has some unavoidable methodological shortcomings. A central concern pertains to the sampling method. The majority of sociologists who read anarchist writings were likely not "famous sociologists," but probably average university-trained intellectuals, not particularly noteworthy today. Their history and thoughts are missed here. Likewise, for the far more numerous non-famous anarchists who surely encountered sociological ideas, it is impossible to know how sociological research influenced their thinking and behavior. This chapter's focus upon the ideas and relations between the famous few of both traditions is a necessary but unfortunate consequence of these problems. Ideally, a "people's history of anarchist-sociology," composed of ideas from rank-and-file anarchists and sociologists, could properly contextualize the impact and role of each upon the other, but much of this record is likely lost to the passage of time. An admirable approach to this end would be in line with the efforts of the Kate Sharpley Library, which attempts to highlight the histories of non-famous, yet dedicated, anarchists.

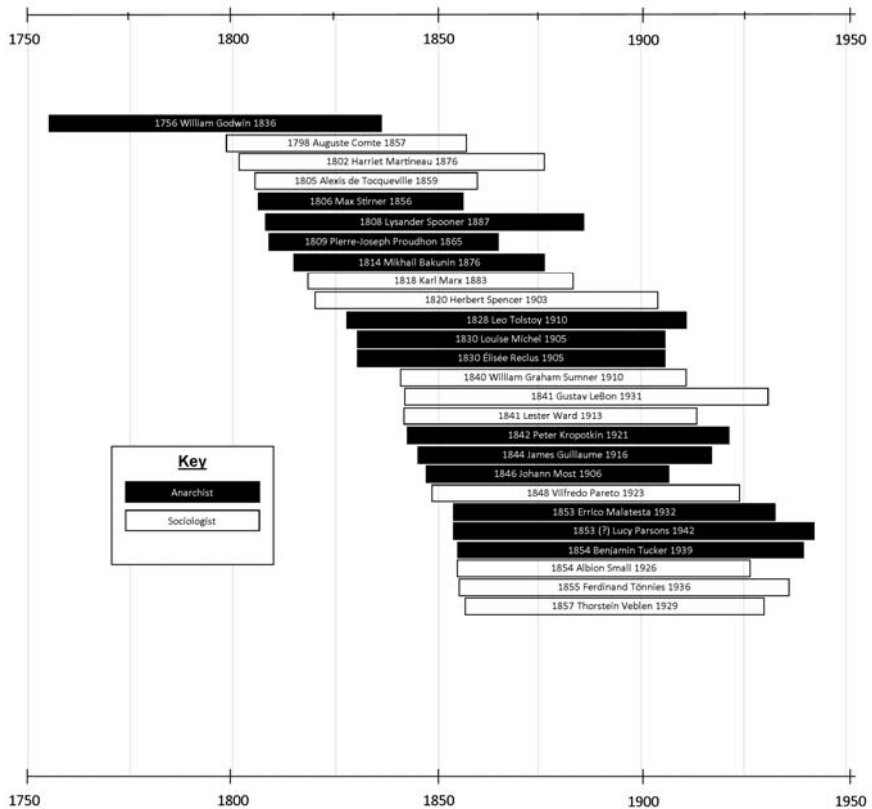


Figure 1. Timeline of Anarchists and Sociologists from the Nineteenth Century

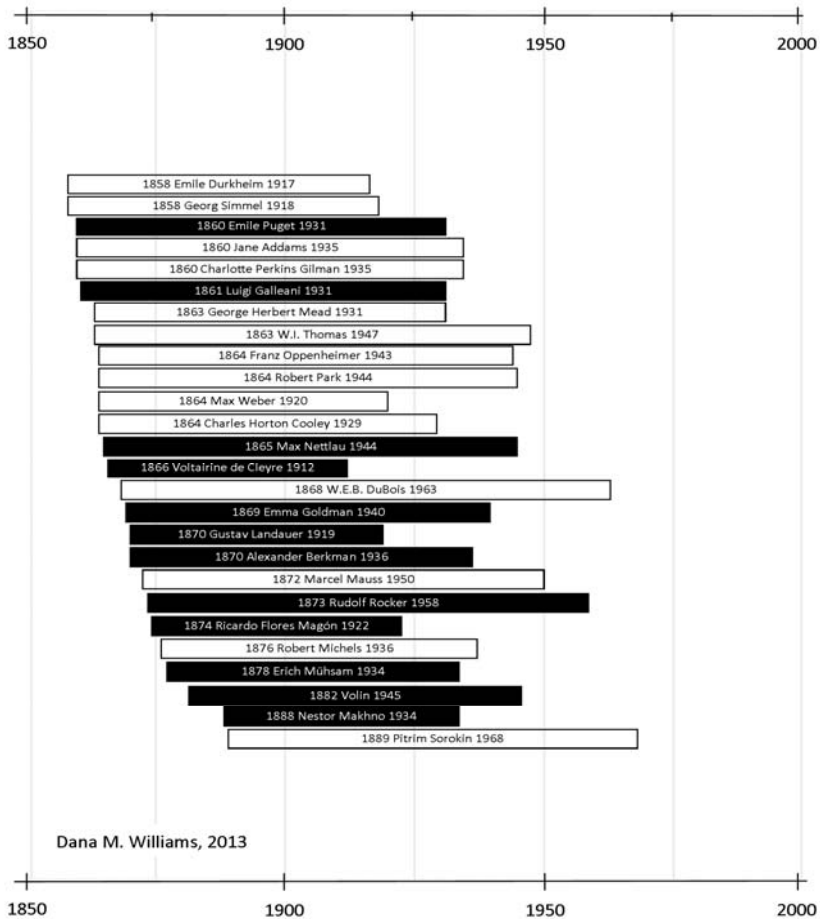


Figure 1. Timeline of Anarchists and Sociologists from the Nineteenth Century (continued)

## Notes

1. See M. Burawoy, "For Public Sociology," *American Sociological Review* 70:1 (2005), pp. 4-28; D. Clawson, et al., *Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007).
2. J.R. Feaging and H. Vera, *Liberation Sociology* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2008).
3. e.g. *ibid.*
4. There are also reasons why anarchism would still wish to stay clear of academia. The classical anarchists' critiques of academia and sociology will be discussed later.
5. P. Kivisto, *Social Theory: Roots and Branches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. xx.
6. W. Du Bois and R.D. Wright, *Politics in the Human Interest: Applying Sociology in the Real World* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).
7. e.g., N. Hong, "Constructing the Anarchist Beast in American Periodical Literature, 1880-1903," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9:1 (1992), pp. 110-30; D.M. McLeod and B.H. Detenber, "Framing Effects of Television News Coverage of Social Protest," *Journal of Communication* 49:3 (1999), pp. 3-23.
8. C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1996).
9. See C. Dale and D. Kalob, "Embracing Social Activism: Sociology in the Service of Social Justice and Peace," *Humanity & Society* 30:2 (2006), pp. 121-152.
10. For a broad discussion of "anarchist-sociology," see J. Shantz and D.W. Williams *Anarchy & Society* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).
11. G. Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston, MA: MacGraw-Hill, 2008); and J. Purkis, "Towards an Anarchist Sociology," in *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, ed. J. Purkis and J. Bowen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 39-54.
12. e.g. J.S. Boyers, "Subversion and the Sociological Canon," *Michigan Sociological Review* 14:1 (2000), pp. 83-93.
13. This is not to claim that Marxism or feminism are locked in stasis and do not continue to develop. For example, Leonardo argues that Baudrillard's simulation theory helps to improve upon Marxist sociology. See Z. Leonardo "Resisting Capital: Simulationist and Socialist Strategies," *Critical Sociology* 29:2 (2003), pp. 211-236.
14. Many well-known anarchists and sociologists, who engaged with each other, were born post-1900, and are thus excluded, somewhat arbitrarily, from this study. Ultimately, only so much can be inferred from the written record. We do not have much idea what Durkheim's missing lecture notes said about Proudhon. We are left wondering what seasoned anarchist activists like Goldman, Malatesta, and Nestor Makhno thought of most sociologists, or

even how many they encountered during their interesting lifetimes (and what their reactions were to such sociologists). Regrettably, the absence of time-travel technology prohibits the most immediate way to acquire such insights: to interview the very individuals who could have provided definitive answers to such questions.

15. P. Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2007 [1892]).
16. See M. Bakunin, *Marxism, Freedom and the State* (London: Freedom Press, 1950).
17. See P. Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).
18. c.f., B. Martin, *Tied Knowledge: Power in Higher Education*, Available at: <http://www.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/pubs/98tk/index.html> (accessed: July 28, 2006).
19. A. Berkman, *What is Anarchism?* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2003 [1929]), p. 2.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Quoted in V. Richards, *Malatesta: His Life and Ideas* (London: Freedom Press, 1965), pp. 85-86.
22. G. Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), pp. 110-112.
23. Quoted in M. Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 282.
24. Quoted in M. Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, Vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 90.
25. *Ibid.*; Also, Proudhon, for his part, is considered by many (especially in France) to be a “sociologist” of sorts. For example, Noland writes that Proudhon was engaged in formulating a “science of society”, and is consequently viewed as a pre-cursor to Durkheim and contemporary French sociology. See A. Noland, “Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: Socialist as Social Scientist,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 26:3 (1967), pp. 313-328.
26. Quoted in P. McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin: The Philosophical Basis of His Anarchism* (New York, NY: Algora, 2002), p. 211.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
28. S. Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf., 1972).
29. G.S. Dunbar, *Élisée Reclus: Historian of Nature* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1978).
30. Cited in Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy* and McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin*.
31. See Comte’s *The Catechism of Positive Religion*.
32. P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2006 [1902]).
33. Incidentally, Katz also claimed that sociologists still ignore the impact and contributions of Kropotkin’s ideas on “self-help” and mutual aid societies, referring to Kropotkin’s *Mutual Aid* as a “historical sociology” book. A.H. Katz, “Self-help and Mutual Aid: An Emerging Social Movement?” *Annual*

- Review of Sociology* 7:1 (1981), pp. 129-155.
34. P. Kropotkin, "Brain Work and Manual Work," *Mother Earth* 1:4 (1906).
  35. A. Wexler, *Emma Goldman in America* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984).
  36. P. Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); N. Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).
  37. P. Kropotkin, "The Scientific Bases of Anarchy," *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 45:4 (1887), pp. 433-443.
  38. P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1967 [1899]).
  39. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*; P. Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (New York, NY: Mother Earth, 1908).
  40. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-42.
  41. W. McElroy, "Benjamin Tucker, Individualism, & Liberty: Not the Daughter but the Mother of Order," *Literature of Liberty: A Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought* 4:3 (1981).
  42. B. Tucker, "On Picket Duty," *Liberty* 11:5 (1895), p. 1.
  43. P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: HarperCollins, 1992).
  44. A.J. Brigati, *The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004), p. 107.
  45. F. Ferrer, *The Origins and Ideals of the Modern School* (London: Watt & Co., 1913), p. 109.
  46. See C. Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984).
  47. E. Goldman, "Was My Life Worth Living?" *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 170 (1934).
  48. See Emma Goldman Papers Project, *The Life and Times of Emma Goldman: A Curriculum for Middle and High School Students* (Berkley, CA: Emma Goldman Papers, 1992).; George Ritzer included Sandefur and MacLean's entry on Goldman in his *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*: "Emma Goldman's contributions to sociology are most evident in her political critiques of major social institutions: the family and marriage, religion, industrial capital, education, and most importantly, the state. Mentored by the most prominent anarchists of her time, she incorporated various strains of anarchy into a social movement reflective of a historical period of American radicalism often lost to historians. Rather than simply advocating anarchism as an intellectual exercise, she tested and expressed her theory through public speaking and her published works in the tradition of sociological "praxis." Goldman was concerned both with educating the public about anarchism as well as providing a critique of social problems that stemmed from society as it was structured." M. Sandefur and V.M. MacLean, "Emma Goldman," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. G. Ritzer (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004-2007).
  49. Kropotkin, "Brain Work and Manual Work."

50. The December 1912 issue: volume 7, number 10.
51. B. Tucker, *Instead of a Book: By a Man Too Busy to Write One* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1972 [1897]), pp. 371-374; we can presume that Sumner ignored Tucker's demand.
52. S. Harney, "Fragment on Kropotkin and Giuliani," *Social Text* 20:3 (2002), p. 11.
53. Cited in L. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971).
54. G. LeBon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Dunwoody, GA: Norman S. Berg, 1968 [1895]), p. 81.
55. Curiously, publishers were not as ideologically driven during this time, as LeBon's *The Psychology of Revolution* was published by Putnam, who also published Kropotkin's 1906 English edition of *The Conquest of Bread*, and even advertised LeBon's book in the back of Kropotkin's.
56. Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois: *The Fight for Equality*.
57. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in American: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folks Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York, NY: Russell & Russell, 1963 [1935]).
58. Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists*.
59. See I. McKay, *Property is Theft!: A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2011).
60. P. Gasper, *The Communist Manifest: A Road Map to History's Most Important Political Document* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket, 2005).
61. A.W. Gouldner, "Marx's Last Battle: Bakunin and the First International," *Theory & Society* 11:6 (1982), pp. 853-884; M. Leier, *Bakunin: The Creative Passion* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2006); Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists*.
62. Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists*, p. 14.
63. Still, Cooley thought the public panic over anarchism was rooted in an unrealistic and "vague dread of anarchy," as people had no "cause to fear" it. C.H. Cooley, *Social Organization* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), pp. 276-277.
64. H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, *Essays from Max Weber* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 229.
65. Quoted in D. Dahlmann, "Max Weber's Relation to Anarchism and Anarchists: The Case of Ernst Toller," in *Max Weber and His Contemporaries*, ed. W.J. Mommsen and J. Osterhammel (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987), p. 374.
66. A. Small and G.E. Vincent, *An Introduction to the Study of Society* (New York, NY: American Book Company, 1984), pp. 18-19.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
68. G. Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1950), p. 282.
69. N.J. Spykman, *The Social Theory of Georg Simmel* (Chicago, IL: University

- of Chicago Press, 1925), p. 175.
70. Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*.
  71. G. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978 [1907]), p. 337.
  72. K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, NY: Harvest Books, 1936), p. 197.
  73. P.A. Sorokin, *The Sociology of Revolution* (New York, NY: Howard Fertig, 1967), p. 120.
  74. Cited in S. Chugerman, *Lester Ward the American Aristotle: A Summary and Interpretation of His Sociology* (New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1965), pp. 356-357.
  75. R. Vernon, "Auguste Comte and the Withering-away of the State," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45:4 (1984), pp. 549-566.
  76. E. Durkheim, *Socialism* (New York, NY: Collier-Macmillan, 1967 [1928]), p. 49.
  77. V. Pareto, *Sociological Writings* (New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 121.
  78. V.J. Tarascio, "Pareto: A View of the Present Through the Past," *Journal of Political Economy* 84:1 (1976), pp. 109-122.
  79. V.J. Femia, *Pareto and Political Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).
  80. Yet, Dina later left Pareto for a socialist, which could explain part of Pareto's emotional coldness towards anarchism. Charles H. Powers, *Vilfredo Pareto* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987).
  81. DuBois was far more indebted to mainstream Marxist-Leninist influences than anarchism: he traveled to the Soviet Union in 1926, claimed "I am a Bolshevik" (Lewis 2000, p. 203), and later even met Mao Tse-tung. Still, he was "familiar" with works critical of the Soviet Union, including Emma Goldman's *My Disillusionment in Russia*. See Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight For Equality*, p. 194.
  82. R. Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1962 [1915]).
  83. Cited in W. Raushenbush, *Robert E. Park: Biography of a Sociologist* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 23.
  84. *Ibid.*
  85. J. Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York, NY: Macmillan Company, 1910).
  86. B. Eddy, "Struggle or Mutual Aid: Jane Addams, Peter Kropotkin, and the Progressive Encounter with Social Darwinism," *The Pluralist* 5:1 (2010), pp. 21-43.
  87. J.W. Linn and A.F. Scott, *Jane Addams: A Biography* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000).
  88. P. Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005).
  89. W.M. Dugger, "Veblen's Radical Theory of Social Evolution," *Journal of Economic Issues* 40:3 (2006), p. 665.

90. Quoted in Chugerman, *Lester Ward the American Aristotle*, pp. 75-76.
91. C.H. Scott, *Lester Frank Ward* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1976), p. 39.
92. L.D. Abbott, *Francisco Ferrer: His Life, Work, and Martyrdom* (New York, NY: Francisco Ferrer Association, 1910).
93. C.M. Hall, *The Sociology of Pierre Joseph Proudhon, 1809-1865* (New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 1971).
94. See the introduction to Durkheim, *Socialism*, written by Marcel Mauss; F. Pearce, *The Radical Durkheim* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).
95. Pearce, *ibid*, p. 68; While Durkheim chose not to directly engage Proudhon, the same was not true for numerous twentieth century French sociologists who followed in the Durkheimian tradition, including Pierre Ansart, Raymond Aron, Célestin Bouglé, and Georges Gurvitch. For example, Bouglé used Proudhon to bridge the critical gap between “individualism” and “sociology.” J.M. Humprey, “Durkheimian sociology and the Twentieth-century politics: the case of Célestin Bouglé,” *History of the Human Sciences* 12:3 (1999):, pp. 117-138.
96. Georges Gurvitch, sociology professor at the Sorbonne, was also a Russian exile with anarchist sympathies. Gurvitch and Sorokin also corresponded regularly. G. Balandier, *Gurvitch* (New York: NY: Harper & Row, 1975).
97. G.D. Jaworski, “Pitirim A. Sorokin’s Sociological Anarchism,” *History of the Human Sciences* 6:3 (1993), p. 67.
98. P. Sorokin, “Conservative Christian Anarchy: Second in a Series of ‘Harvard Credos,’” *The Harvard Progressive* (December 1939), pp. 13-15.
99. Dahlmann, “Max Weber’s Relation to Anarchism.”
100. Gerth and Mills, *Essays from Max Weber*.
101. M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (New York, NY: Bedminster Press, 1968 [1922]).
102. Quoted in W.G. Runciman, *Max Weber: Selections in Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 75.
103. Dahlmann, “Max Weber’s Relation to Anarchism.”
104. See P. Whimster, *Max Weber and the Culture of Anarchy* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s, 1999).
105. Dahlmann, “Max Weber’s Relation to Anarchism,” p. 367.
106. W.J. Mommsen, “Max Weber and German Social Democracy,” in *Socialism and the Intelligentsia, 1880-1914*, ed. C. Levy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 95.
107. *Ibid*.
108. According to B. Susser, “The Anarcho-Federalism of Martin Buber,” *Publius* 9:4 (1979), pp. 103-115.
109. J. Simon, “Dilthey and Simmel: A Reading from/toward Buber’s Philosophy of History,” in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, ed. M. Zank (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), pp. 127-147.
110. J. Horrox, *A Living Revolution: Anarchism in the Kibbutz Movement* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).
111. M. Buber, *Paths in Utopia* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996

- [1949]).
112. A. Berkman, *What is Anarchism?* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2003 [1929]).
  113. See Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*; G. Kearns, "The political pivot of geography," *The Geographical Journal* 170: 4 (2004), pp. 337-346.
  114. G. Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*...
  115. V.L. Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966); E. Gabriel, "The Left Liberal Critique of Anarchism in Imperial Germany," *German Studies Review* 33:2 (2010), pp. 331-350.
  116. Hong, "Constructing the Anarchist Beast," pp. 110-30.
  117. Curiously, Durkheim never comments on Kropotkin's work. Kropotkin gave passing reference to Durkheim (who was 16 years Kropotkin's junior) in his *Mutual Aid*, and others have noted a shared preoccupation for the two intellectuals, especially their concern with social solidarity. Gehlke comments that while the overlaps were limited, both insisted upon "the inefficiency of the state to regular economic life; on the unfreedom of 'free' contracts between the weak and the strong; on the possibility of voluntary action as a basis for solidarity." C.E. Gehlke, *Emile Durkheim's Contributions to Sociological Theory* (New York: NY: AMS Press, 1968), p. 178.
  118. E. Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1982 [1895]), p. 104.
  119. J.C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).
  120. M.S. Archer, *Social Origins of Educational Systems* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009).
  121. See J.E. Pedersen, "Sexual Politics in Comte and Durkheim: Feminism, History and the French Sociological Tradition," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27:1 (2001), pp. 229-263.
  122. A Prichard, "What Can the Absence of Anarchism Tell us About the History and Purpose of International Relations?" *Review of International Studies* 37:4 (2011), p. 1655.
  123. J Sprague, "Holy Men and Big Guns: the Can[n]on in Social Theory," *Gender & Society* 11:1 (1997), pp. 88-107.
  124. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
  125. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
  126. Of course, the same could be said for countless other traditions, ranging from liberalism and positivism to surrealism and postmodernism.
  127. Others have recently pursued similar lines of inquiry, attempting to uncover a more progressive and advocacy-oriented interpretation of classical sociologists, e.g.: Feagin and Vera, *Liberation Sociology*.
  128. R. Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
  129. Burawoy claims that universities are "virtually the only refuge for [American] Marxists," and thus Marxism is incredibly academic in the US. M. Burawoy, "The Resurgence of Marxism in American Sociology," *American Journal of*

- Sociology* 88 [Suplement], (1982), pp. S1-S30.
130. e.g. Amster, *Contemporary Anarchist Studies*; N.J. Jun and S. Wahl, *New Perspectives on Anarchism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009).
  131. Consult any number of recent books on modern sociological theory [e.g., Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*] or the anarchist movement [e.g. U. Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008); J. Shantz, *Constructive Anarchy: Building Infrastructures of Resistance* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010); C. el-Ojeili, "Anarchism as the Contemporary Spirit of Anti-capitalism? A Critical Survey of Recent Debates," *Critical Sociology* (2012)], and the advances will be readily apparent.
  132. D.M. Williams, "From Top to Bottom, a Thoroughly Stratified World: An Anarchist View of Inequality and Domination," *Race, Gender & Class* 19:3-4 (2012), pp. 9-34.
  133. These more contemporary sociologists had a complex of relationships with anarchism: Blumer corresponded with Ben Reitman and bragged about knowing Emma Goldman, Daniel Bell spent some of his youth at an anarchist commune and met Rudolf Rocker, Mills once labeled himself a "goddamn anarchist" (as did Goffman, although surprisingly without an expletive), and Bourdieu told an interviewer that anarchists were exactly the kind of people he was writing for.
  134. A good example of this early indirection or imprecision is Harriet Martineau (best known as Auguste Comte's English-language translator, but also an early methodologist) and her review of a William Godwin book (his *Thoughts on Man*), prior to a meaningful understanding of the term "anarchism", or, for that matter, "sociology." H. Martineau, *Mischellanies*, Vol. II (Boston, MA: Hilliard Gray & Company, 1975 [1836]).
  135. K. Korsch, *Karl Marx* (New York, NY: J. Wiley & Sons, 1938).
  136. I. Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment* (New York, NY: Time, 1963), p. 130.
  137. M Schmidt and L van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).

## CHAPTER TWO

# KROPOTKIN: MUTUAL AID, SUSTAINABILITY AND THE PROSPECTS FOR FREEDOM

JON BEKKEN

The longer I have been in the anarchist movement the more struck I have been by how much more modern the thought of Bakunin and Kropotkin is than most of what passes for theoretical innovation on the left today (and even in anarchist circles).<sup>1</sup> As Iain McKay points out in a recent article in *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review*, our theoretical tradition has stood the test of time far better than have the Marxist currents so many look to for inspiration.<sup>2</sup>

My subject in this chapter is Kropotkin, whose writings on mutual aid have in recent years begun to receive serious consideration from evolutionary biologists and psychologists, who first rediscovered much of what Kropotkin argued 120 years ago and more recently have (in at least some cases) acknowledged that Kropotkin was there first and begun to seriously engage with his work.<sup>3</sup> Kropotkin's argument more than a century ago for the integration of agriculture and industry surely offers a far more modern—and sustainable—vision than the current global division of labor with its enormous environmental and social costs; and so we see the rise of movements around the world dedicated to local sourcing and diversified economies as part of a broader ecological project.

History has clearly demonstrated the practical advantages of federalism and free association over centralization and coercion, even if the anarchist approach is not essential on philosophical grounds in order to facilitate the realization of individual and communal well-being and fulfillment.

I have written most about Kropotkin's economic vision—again, far more modern than anything capitalism or Marxism has on offer, and far more practical than the half-measures so often urged on us in the name of realism. This work has taken the fullest form in a chapter in the collection

*Radical Economics and Labour*,<sup>4</sup> and in a presentation I delivered in Barcelona last year as part of the CNT's centenary celebrations.<sup>5</sup> Like most of the classic theoreticians of the anarchist movement, Kropotkin's economic ideas arose out of an engagement with the workers' movement of his day.<sup>6</sup> They were not abstract principles derived from studying theorems, but rather represented an analysis honed in workers' struggles and developed out of their lived experiences and their reflections upon them. You can see these debates played out in the workers' press of the day, in pamphlets and union congresses, as well as in books in which theorists like Kropotkin offered more systematic exposition of and support for principles that reflected the emerging consensus of the movement of which they were a part. As a result, Kropotkin's economic works read quite differently than those produced by his contemporaries. Kropotkin addresses questions such as how one might measure each worker's contribution to the creation of value concretely, by examining how one might understand such a question in relation to mining coal or building a house. The result is an economic analysis far more grounded in workers' lived experiences—and, hence, I would argue, far more radical—than can be found in the writings of many contemporary radical thinkers.

Kropotkin begins from the recognition that modern production is intrinsically social. To illustrate this, he turned to coal mining:

One man controls the lift, continually rushing the cage from level to level so that men and coal may be moved about. If he relaxes his concentration for an instant, the apparatus will be destroyed, many men killed, and work brought to a standstill. ...

Is it he who renders the greatest service in the mine? Or is it perhaps that boy who from below signals to him when it is time to raise the cage to the surface? Is it instead the miner who is risking his life at every moment of the day? ... or again is it the engineer who would miss the coal seam and have the miners dig into stone if he made the smallest error in his calculations? ...

All the workers engaged in the mine contribute within the limits of their powers, their knowledge... and their skill to mine coal. And all we can say is that everybody has the right to *live*, to satisfy their needs, and even their fantasies, once the most pressing needs of all have been satisfied. But how can one estimate their labors?<sup>7</sup>

Obviously, you cannot. And yet in this passage we have not begun to identify everyone who contributes to the production of that coal. What of the construction workers who built the railways to the pit head, without which

the coal would sit useless? What of the farmers, who raise the food the coal miners eat? What of those who build the machines that will burn the coal, without which it is simply dirt?

All production is fundamentally social in nature. From this basic fact, many things follow. If individuals do not, *cannot*, create real wealth, then how can private ownership be justified? Just as it is impossible to argue that any one person created a lump of coal or a bolt of cloth, so it is impossible to justify private ownership of buildings or land. Buildings, after all, are not built by their owners. Their construction is a cooperative endeavor involving innumerable workers in mines, steel mills, brick yards, etc.<sup>8</sup>

Like the ground they stand upon, buildings are a common heritage:

Take the town of Paris—a creation of so many centuries... How could one maintain to an inhabitant of that town, who works every day to embellish it, to purify it, to nourish it, to make it a center of thought and art — how could one assert before one who produces this wealth that the palaces adorning the streets of Paris belong in all justice to those who are the legal proprietors today? ... It is by spoliation that they hold these riches!<sup>9</sup>

That this remains so can readily be seen by examining the value of today's office buildings and shopping complexes. Without even the slightest improvements, their value rises so long as the local economy prospers. However, no sum of money or quantity of labor invested in maintenance or beautification is sufficient to maintain their value when the local economy fails. For their value is not derived from the money invested, nor from the bricks and mortar (and plastic, steel and cement) of which they are constructed. Not even the labor of the workers who build and maintain these modern temples to capital determines their value. In the final analysis, their value depends almost entirely upon the wealth and prosperity of the greater society. The most luxurious hotel built in a dying city will soon fade with its surroundings, while the meanest hovel increases in value as surrounding properties are developed. We enrich each other—not only spiritually, but materially as well—as we work, contemplate, and play together; and without the efforts of society as a whole no one prospers. Private ownership, then, is not merely unjust: it is absurd.

Given that it is impossible to isolate the specific contribution of any individual to the wealth created by society, there can be no role for money or wages. In his monumental work, *The Conquest of Bread*, Kropotkin<sup>10</sup> devoted a lengthy chapter to rebutting the notion that people would not work without compulsion. Far from shirking work when they do not receive a wage, when people work cooperatively for the good of all, they

often achieve feats of productivity never realizable through economic or state coercion.

As much as possible, Kropotkin argued, all goods and services should be provided free of charge to all. Goods available in abundance should be available without limit; those in short supply should be rationed. Already, Kropotkin noted a century ago, many goods were provided based on need. Bridges no longer required tolls for passage; parks and gardens were open to all without charge; railroads offered monthly passes; schools and roads were free; water was supplied to every house; libraries provided information to all without considering the ability to pay, and offered assistance to those who did not know how to manage the catalogue. (That many of these services have been eroded in recent years does not invalidate his premise.)

More than a hundred years ago, the means existed to offer...

...a more substantial well-being than that enjoyed to-day by the middle classes. And, moreover, each worker belonging to this society would have at his disposal at least five hours a day which he could devote to science, art, and individual needs which do not come under the category of *necessities*, but will probably do so later on, when man's productivity will have augmented, and those objects will no longer appear luxurious or inaccessible.<sup>11</sup>

This point was of the greatest importance. It was not enough merely to meet people's material wants—human beings must also be free to pursue their creative passions. Kropotkin believed that luxury, far from being wasteful, was an absolute necessity. However, if these joys, “now reserved to a few... to give leisure and the possibility of developing everyone's intellectual capacities,” were to be obtained for all, “the social revolution must guarantee daily bread to all.”

For Kropotkin, the purpose of all economic activity was to meet human needs. Today, of course, production has little if anything to do with this objective. Studies of famines around the world, for example, have found no correlation between food production and starvation—indeed, food is often exported from areas where people are dying of hunger and hunger-related diseases.<sup>12</sup> Today, freighters carrying automobiles made in Japan and the United States pass each other on the high seas, in an endless merry-go-round repeated in almost every realm of human endeavor.

Production must be reorganized on a new basis, and shifted from export and luxury goods to meeting genuine human needs. However, it is not simply a matter of producing different goods. The way work is organized and carried out must also be fundamentally transformed. When workers

control their own workplaces, and reap the full benefit of their labors, they will no longer tolerate poor conditions or allow their energies to be squandered in anti-social production.

While it is neither possible nor desirable to spell out in every detail how an anarchist economy might operate, Kropotkin argued that it is essential to think about its general outlines in advance, so that we might build with a purpose. Expropriation, direct action, federalism, and self-management are, for Kropotkin, the means. A society not built upon communist principles would inevitably succumb to the central power it established to oversee production and control distribution. Only the free distribution of necessities, in all their variety, on the basis not of position or productivity, but of need, is compatible with a free society.

In all of this, Kropotkin was careful to test his theories against the real world. *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, in particular, demonstrates his wide-ranging research and his rigorous application of the data to support his arguments. Had more economists—radical or otherwise—followed Kropotkin’s suggestion that they rely less on formulas and instead analyze concrete economic developments, we might have fewer “economic laws,” which are often demonstrably absurd, and more understanding of the actual challenges that we face in organizing an economy, and a society, geared to meeting human needs.

As recent events demonstrate the bankruptcy of so many schools of political theory and economics, the classical anarchist thinkers hold up quite well. Peter Kropotkin published widely on economics, evolution, and the nature of a sustainable world, among other topics. At the time he was often criticized for his excessive optimism—about human nature, about the possibilities for agricultural production, about the capacity of voluntary cooperation to carry out complex social functions, and the like. However, while Kropotkin may have been too optimistic about the trajectory of human freedom, he saw unfolding within the capitalist state (always, he was clear, as a result of social struggle), a century of experience has confirmed his assessment of our capacity to realize abundance and freedom. The means are at hand; it is simply a question of our determination to reclaim them, and to redirect them toward the common good.

## Notes

1. See, for examples: Graham Purchase, "Green Flame: Kropotkin and the Birth of Ecology," *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 54 (2010), pp. 29-33, 35.
2. Iain McKay, "Anarchist Theory: Use it or Lose it," *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 57 (2012), pp. 26-30.
3. Iain McKay, "Mutual Aid: An introduction and evaluation," *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 52 (2009), pp. 25-32; Purchase, "Green Flame...", pp. 29-33, 35.
4. Jon Bekken, "Peter Kropotkin and Economics for a New Society," in *Radical Economics and Labor: Essays Inspired by the IWW Centennial*, ed. Jon Bekken and Frederic S. Lee (London: Routledge, 2009).
5. Jon Bekken, "The Economics of Freedom: Creating Abundant Lives for All." Alternatives to Capitalism: Self-Management in the Spotlight—A Conference Celebrating the Centenary of the Founding of the National Confederation of Labor (CNT), Barcelona, Spain. An edited version was published in *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* 54 (2010), pp. 13-22.
6. Carolyn Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism 1872-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
7. Piotr Kropotkin, "The Wage System," in *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society*, ed. V. Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1983), pp. 103-104.
8. Piotr Kropotkin, "Must We Occupy Ourselves with an Examination of the Ideal of a Future System?" in *Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution*, ed. M. Miller (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970).
9. Piotr Kropotkin, "Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Idea," in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, ed. R. Baldwin (New York: Dover, 1970), p. 125.
10. Piotr Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (New York: New York University Press, 1972).
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.
12. R. Dahrendorf, *The Modern Social Conflict*. (California, United States: University of California Press, 1988), p. 9.

**PART TWO**

**HISTORICAL ANALYSES, METHODOLOGIES,  
AND PERSPECTIVES**



## CHAPTER THREE

# ‘WE’ IS FOR ANARCHISM: CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN THE ANARCHIST PRESS OF *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE* SWITZERLAND

NINO KÜHNIS

Looking at the history of organized anarchism and of anarchist theorists, several connections with Switzerland are revealed. The anti-authoritarian International Worker’s Association (I.W.A.) was inaugurated in 1872 in St. Imier and I.W.A. congresses took place in Geneva and Basel. Renowned theorists such as Michael Bakunin, Elisée Reclus, Peter Kropotkin, Errico Malatesta, Paul Brousse, and John Most lived and campaigned in the small republic in central Europe for a number of years. While anarchism proved to have an affinity with Switzerland due to the country’s relatively high tolerance of anarchist newspapers, congresses, schools, and gatherings at the end of the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> the love was not exactly returned, to put it mildly. Swiss publications with bourgeois, conservative and/or social-democratic agendas repeatedly demonized anarchism as a plague and its adherents as pests, vermin, traitors, or psychopaths.<sup>2</sup>

This opinion was echoed by statist practices. From the 1840s onward, both the official and public discourses remained, by and large, hostile to anarchism and anarchists alike.<sup>3</sup> While anarchist responses mutated into brawls with the general public from time to time,<sup>4</sup> officials supported and nurtured the unfriendly public opinion by a variety of means, ranging from expulsions of political dissidents<sup>5</sup> and the introduction of Anarchist Acts<sup>6</sup> to the sharpening of the so-called “*guillotine sèche*” (dry guillotine) by passing on sensitive data from the political police to employers.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, Switzerland “remained (...) one of the most important European locations for anarchists in exile.”<sup>8</sup>

Newspapers at the time were a productive industry in Switzerland. As late as 1939, Switzerland was reputed to have the highest number of pub-

lished titles among all countries.<sup>9</sup> Whereas in 2007 merely 205 titles were on sale,<sup>10</sup> in 1896 there were 338 available.<sup>11</sup> Anarchist newspapers were not an exception to this rule and contributed to the variety of publications on offer. In the three decades between the beginning of the official persecution of anarchists and anarchism in early 1885 and the onset of the First World War, no less than 23 titles in French and German were published, including *Freie Gesellschaft*, *Junge Schweiz*, *Der Weckruf*, *Revolutionäre Bibliothek*, *Der Vorposten*, *Polis*, *Die Vorkämpferin*, *Der Sozialist*, *Arbeiter-Wille*, *Jahrbuch der Freien Generation*, *Le Révolté*, *L'Égalitaire*, *La Critique Sociale*, *L'Avenir*, *Le Réveil*, *L'Émancipation*, *Action Anarchiste*, *La Voix du Peuple*, *L'Almanach du Travailleur*, *L'Union Syndicale*, *Le Boycotteur*, *L'Exploitée*, and *Bulletin de l'École Ferrer*.<sup>12</sup> However, anarchist media was, much like anarchists themselves, not so much welcomed as tolerated. Constant repression and persecution, especially for foreign, asylum-seeking anarchists, was aimed not so much at singular persons but at the social movement as a whole. These de facto anti-anarchist practices weren't solely a Swiss phenomenon, but reflected a predominant opinion in *Belle Époque Atlantica*. From 1884 to 1894 national laws were introduced from France to Italy, from Germany to Austria, and throughout Europe. In a more international gesture, anti-anarchist sentiments culminated in the Conferences Against Anarchism in Rome 1898 and St. Petersburg 1904.<sup>13</sup>

## Why Collective Identity?

Despite these obstacles that affected travel, work, and other aspects of daily life, the anarchist movement persisted. As I argue, collective identity played an integral role in this process. The reason for this assumption lies in the character of anarchism as a social movement. Unlike other social movements, anarchism avoided on principle any attempts to ameliorate the status quo through reforms on. Political participation—and the social, professional and economic status and benefits that come with it—were diametrically opposed to the anarchist *Weltanschauung*. On the contrary, anarchism demanded all the more the abolition of paid administrative offices in order to establish a federative, non-hierarchical society based on mutual aid and solidarity. Therefore, we must focus on abstracta when researching anarchism. It is values such as the sharing of goals, ideals and aspirations with like-minded activists, the social and emotional benefit of group mindedness, or the opportunity to collectively co-establish and co-maintain a social group on its way to social change, that emerge as incentives for an active engagement in the anarchist movement. These are all

elements that—among others—contribute to collective identity and implicitly and explicitly form an integral part of articles and commentaries in the anarchist press at the turn of the century. Hence, collective identity promises to be a fruitful theoretical approach to research into the anarchist movement. It incorporates different strands of abstracta that are frequent subjects of discussion in the anarchist movement and, by extension, essential aspects of that movement. Collective identity's dualistic character of simultaneously being and becoming allows for a constant re-shifting and renewal of the movement's means and ends at the same time—a process which, in consequence, made the movement flexible and open to change.

### Collective Identity Theory

Collective identity, like any theory, comes with problems.<sup>14</sup> It has been approached from many scientific angles over the past several decades and has been employed in many disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, sociology, cultural studies, communication studies, neurobiology, and even medicine. Although this interdisciplinary appeal has had positive consequences, it has also led to the proliferation of blurry terminology, as different disciplines employ the same terms to describe different phenomena. The resulting terminological confusion and its subsequent semantic fraying is but one of the theory's problems. Others include its elasticity, its transitory character, its emphasis on an ontological state of eternal non-being, and its constructivism (the latter often being misinterpreted as simply a political strategy). The fact that most academic studies in the field are highly specified case studies further complicates the development of concise methodologies wholly applicable to different social groups. Despite these and other flaws, collective identity remains a scientifically viable theory. It offers great insight into social movements due to its versatility, its adaptability, and its non-hierarchical form, and it contributes productively in various and changeable degrees to a historically specific, mosaic-style sketch of the researched object. These aspects are especially useful in the historical analysis of anarchist movements. Researched this way, key characteristics of the object of investigation can be incorporated in a non-hierarchical manner that responds to the object's particular historical context. Furthermore, collective identity theory can offer an accurate representation by reflecting factional differences within a movement without classifying the movement as a whole as a failure. This is possible because it does not subscribe to a monolithic and unidirectional movement-model nor presume a strictly utilitarian *Weltbild* as does, for example, Mancur Olson's theory of rational choice.<sup>15</sup> Out of the different components that

are recognized as contributing to the establishment and/or maintenance of collective identities, it is most rewarding to assemble those which echo the investigated social movement's distinct features. Because the categories and dimensions employed are intrinsic to the researched group, the distance between researcher, theory, and the object of interest can be minimized and, as a consequence, the materializing sketch grows in resolution and authenticity,

When taking the anarchist movement's characteristics and features into consideration, the impartation of hypergoods, framing processes, subidentity framing processes, emotions, traditionalisms, and self-designation are all productive and relevant components in the elaboration and maintenance of anarchist collective identity manifested in the anarchist press.

The impartation of both positive and negative hypergoods illustrates the movement's goals, aspirations, methods, and strategies, as well as how it disseminates the group's prevalent narratives, worldviews, and constructions of meaning. Applied framing processes demonstrate the group's aim of increasing groupness by distinguishing itself from its antagonists. While framing processes are productive on various occasions and in various directions, they share a common ground by aiming to consolidate the group's collective identity through the clarification of the group's outside. Subidentity framing processes, on the other hand, are productive in factionalized social movements. Through subidentity framing processes the group's collective identity is consolidated, sharpened, and accentuated by and through its differences with other schools of thought within the investigated community. Implemented emotionalisms contribute to group-asserting excitement or indignation and are often entangled with other components such as the impartation of hypergoods or framing processes. The component of traditionalism performs various functions within the movement, all of which involve the construction of a collective past. Among other functions, traditionalisms serve as religious and/or nationalist recuperations. Lastly, the component of self-designation contributes significantly to the shaping and re-shaping of the group's collective identity through the use of specific terms and metaphors for self-designation. In addition to these mechanisms, other productive elements can be found such as the application of the dysphemism treadmill or attempts to transform collective commemorations from a primarily cephalic to a physical condition.

## Construction of Collective Identity in Anarchist Press

Within only a few pages of publication space per title—typically four pages per issue—the anarchist press of *fin-de-siècle* Switzerland displays the abovementioned components prominently. As such, they appear to be important for the movement in terms of the construction and/or maintenance of collective identity. Although the respective components vary in manner, frequency, and intensity, all of the twenty-four observed titles incorporated a majority of them either implicitly or explicitly. Often, various components appear in conjunction with one another. For instance, many hypergoods were postulated in convergence with framing processes in reaction to social perception. Catalyzed by the latter, the community first separated the “we” from the “others” in a framing process and subsequently characterized it in more detail by imparting hypergoods.

Most of the titles preferred and emphasized certain components over others. Framing processes and the imparting of positive and negative hypergoods were particularly common. Self-designation, subidentity framing processes, and emotionalisms were applied less often, but not necessarily with smaller constitutive force.

Frequency, as a quick look at the component of traditionalisms shows, does not inherently indicate efficacy. Traditionalisms might not be used as prominently as framing processes. Nonetheless, they show just as well how differently constitutive elements have been put to use in the anarchist press to simultaneously foster and maintain the anarchist movement.

## Use of Collective Identity in Anarchist Press

Not surprisingly for a pluralistic social movement, there is more than one use of collective identity to be detected in the anarchist press. In this chapter, a look at a couple of titles shall illuminate one exemplary use of this phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> Traditionalisms occurred in *Jahrbuch der Freien Generation*, published 1910-1914 with the aim of cementing a pan-anarchist collective identity without trying to overcome conflicts and factions within the movement. In a calendar entitled “*Archiv des sozialen Lebens und Kampfes der Internationale*,” the almanac introduced memorial days that would have applied originally to either anarcho-syndicalists (see Fig. 1, February 12 or May 9) or to anarcho-communists (see March 10 or June 30). In doing this without any further differentiation, the community that published, and was concomitantly represented by, the *Jahrbuch der Freien Generation* created pan-anarchist moments of commemoration.

1912						
JANUAR	FEBRUAR	MÄRZ	APRIL	MAI	JUNI	
Montag 1 Dienstag 2 Mittwoch 3 Donn. 4 Freitag 5 Samstag 6	Donn. 1 Freitag 2 Samstag 3 Sonntag 4 Montag 5 Dienstag 6 Mittwoch 7 Donn. 8 Freitag 9 Samstag 10 Sonntag 11 Montag 12 Dienstag 13 Mittwoch 14 Donn. 15 Freitag 16 Samstag 17 Sonntag 18 Montag 19 Dienstag 20 Mittwoch 21 Donn. 22 Freitag 23 Samstag 24 Sonntag 25 Montag 26 Dienstag 27 Mittwoch 28 Donn. 29 Freitag 30 Samstag 31	Freitag 1 Samstag 2 Sonntag 3 Montag 4 Dienstag 5 Mittwoch 6 Donn. 7 Freitag 8 Samstag 9 Sonntag 10 Montag 11 Dienstag 12 Mittwoch 13 Donn. 14 Freitag 15 Samstag 16 Sonntag 17 Montag 18 Dienstag 19 Mittwoch 20 Donn. 21 Freitag 22 Samstag 23 Sonntag 24 Montag 25 Dienstag 26 Mittwoch 27 Donn. 28 Freitag 29 Samstag 30 Sonntag 31	Montag 1 Dienstag 2 Mittwoch 3 Donn. 4 Freitag 5 Samstag 6 Sonntag 7 Montag 8 Dienstag 9 Mittwoch 10 Donn. 11 Freitag 12 Samstag 13 Sonntag 14 Montag 15 Dienstag 16 Mittwoch 17 Donn. 18 Freitag 19 Samstag 20 Sonntag 21 Montag 22 Dienstag 23 Mittwoch 24 Donn. 25 Freitag 26 Samstag 27 Sonntag 28 Montag 29 Dienstag 30 Mittwoch 31	Mittwoch 1 Donn. 2 Freitag 3 Samstag 4 Sonntag 5 Montag 6 Dienstag 7 Mittwoch 8 Donn. 9 Freitag 10 Samstag 11 Sonntag 12 Montag 13 Dienstag 14 Mittwoch 15 Donn. 16 Freitag 17 Samstag 18 Sonntag 19 Montag 20 Dienstag 21 Mittwoch 22 Donn. 23 Freitag 24 Samstag 25 Sonntag 26 Montag 27 Dienstag 28 Mittwoch 29 Donn. 30 Freitag 31	Sonntag 1 Montag 2 Dienstag 3 Mittwoch 4 Donn. 5 Freitag 6 Samstag 7 Sonntag 8 Montag 9 Dienstag 10 Mittwoch 11 Donn. 12 Freitag 13 Samstag 14 Sonntag 15 Montag 16 Dienstag 17 Mittwoch 18 Donn. 19 Freitag 20 Samstag 21 Sonntag 22 Montag 23 Dienstag 24 Mittwoch 25 Donn. 26 Freitag 27 Samstag 28 Sonntag 29 Montag 30 Dienstag 31	4. 1903. König Alex. 2. Königs- Draga von Serbien werden in Belgrad durch die militärisch Verschwör- u. Offiziere des Peter Korogore- wisch ermordet, 12. mündlich 13. sofort zum König pro- klamieren. Höchst- gestellte Persönlich- keiten des serbischen Staats sind Verbindete u. Mithel- an der Er- mordung d. Königs und dessen Frau 20. 1876. Tod des groß. Deut- schens u. Anarchisten Michael Bakunin.

Figure. 1: Archiv des sozialen Lebens und Kampfes der Internationale. Source: *Jahrbuch der Freien Generation*, 1911, p. 4.

This act, delivered in times of heated arguments between these two anarchist subidentities, can be understood as an attempt to emphasize common ground as much as it perpetuates a collective identity of a diverse movement of movements. On top of this, it increased the number of collective commemorations and therefore, also the occasions to set up festivities through the installation of mixed memorial days. As a consequence, this augmented the opportunities to root the movement more firmly in everyday life. These events expanded subidentity boundaries and thus provided the largely cephalic community with further possibilities to transcend collective commemoration to a physical level which complemented the often theory-laden political gatherings or purely textual commemorations as community serving and supporting means. The invoking of traditionalisms in the anarchist press in this sense served the movement with an internal aim.

On the other hand, newspapers such as *La Voix du Peuple* employed a different use of the component of traditionalisms. Through articles and caricatures, traditionalisms were created and perpetuated to serve a universalistic purpose, presumably with the main goal of expanding the audience and widening the movement. This can be observed exemplarily in the title *La Voix du Peuple* published 1907-1914. Traditionalisms here helped to create and retain links between the movement's goals and history and ancient local history or current states of mind. This was addressed by connecting parts of the anarchist self to existing nationalist myths, so that an impression of a not completely isolated collective identity could be gained. A quote from an early issue of *La Voix du Peuple* illustrates this practice. After having placed the term "*patrie*" (fatherland) only in quotation marks in former issues (to identify the community's disbelief in the concept), patriotic feelings emerge in the article "*Nous continuons...*":

*L'heure est passée des querelles de doctrines et de nationalités. Nous ne devons nous rappeler que nous sommes Suisses que pour sentir la brûlante rougeur de la honte nous monter au front devant l'avachissement de notre patrie, prosternée aux pieds de la réaction européenne.*<sup>17</sup>

In this passage, published in the spring of 1906, the myth of Swiss pugnacity is ascribed to the anarchist self, which frees anarchism from the stigma of being an inherently non or un-Swiss movement. This practice, which I shall call archetypical and/or nationalist recuperation, not only countered the widespread belief that anarchism in Switzerland was largely a movement run by foreigners, but also met the normative nationalist *zeitgeist* and thereby rendered anarchism a viable option for a wider and not already integrated audience.

A caricature published in *La Voix du Peuple* in September 1912 bears a similar constitutive strategy. In it, the anarchist community organized in and around *La Voix du Peuple* criticizes Swiss officials for cutting down civil liberties, namely freedom of speech, in favor of reactionary foreign monarchies. In the same caricature, the anarchist Luigi Bertoni, who was arrested precisely for this reason, is depicted as a torch-bearer for constitutionally guaranteed Swiss liberties, and thus portrayed as both an anarchist and a freedom fighter for Swiss interests in the vein of the national hero Wilhelm Tell, at whose pedestal his case is being contextualized, as one can see in Fig. 2.<sup>18</sup>

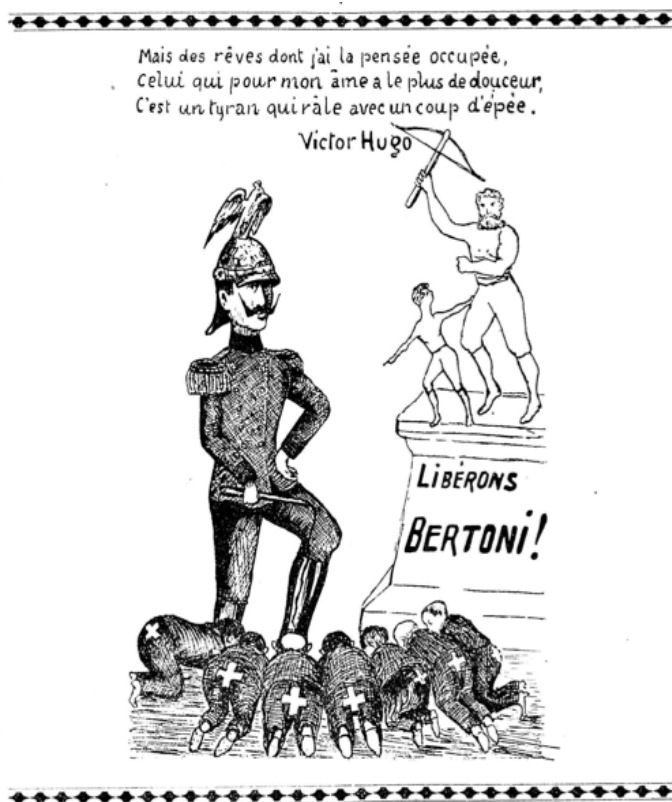


Figure 2: German Kaiser Wilhelm II's visit to Zurich in 1912 coincided with a speech of renowned Swiss anarchist Luigi Bertoni in the nearby village of Dietikon, ZH. To avoid any possible havoc, Zurich police forces arrested Bertoni and kept him in jail for around 10 days. Source: *La Voix du Peuple* 7:35 (7.9.1912), p. 2.

Interestingly, at the same time when nationalist recuperations occurred, nationalism also happened to be imparted as a negative hypergood in the *La Voix du Peuple*, more often than not even on the same pages. In what appears to be a contradictory, yet for collective identity a fully constitutionally functional practice, the temporary and partial approximation to the overtly nationalist *zeitgeist* indicates a mainly external aim of traditionalisms. Nationalist recuperations promised demand for anarchism from the group's outside, where appealing to a nationalist or patriotic concept was regarded as fruitful, albeit opposed to the group's inherently internationalist inside.<sup>19</sup> The invoking of traditionalisms in this sense must therefore be

understood as a means to fortify the anarchist community through a universalistically motivated external use.

## Collective Identity in the Anarchist Press

The observed diversity in construction components finds a parallel in the embodiments of anarchist collective identity. Instead of one singular collective identity, a plurality of collective identities materializes in the investigated journals throughout the chosen time period. In consequence, *the* anarchist collective identity takes shape as a conglomerate of multiple collective identities, arising from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. Certain hypergoods, such as goals, values, and strategies, were shared throughout the different wings of the movement: anti-authoritarianism, decentralized and federative non-hierarchical structures, a profound emphasis on egalitarianism, solidarity, mutual aid, and the repeatedly stressed importance of education were imparted in all titles. Others, like methods, conceptions, the idealized movement's substrate, or means to be undertaken for achieving a free, just, and equal society occasionally lead to diametrically opposed positions within the anarchist spectrum. Anarchist collective identity in *fin-de-siècle* Switzerland must therefore be imagined as a sparkling multitude of collective identities, as far as they are represented in the movement's own press. There are collective identities to be detected, often simultaneously, of anarchist-type female worker communities (*Vorkämpferin*), intellectual anarchist communities (*Junge Schweiz*, *Polis*), as well as of anarcho-socialist (*Sozialist*), anarcho-syndicalist (*Arbeiter-Wille*, *Le Boycotteur*, *L'Egalitaire*) or anarcho-communist communities (*Le Révolté*, *L'Égalitaire*, *La Critique Sociale*, *L'Avenir*, *Le Réveil*, *Action Anarchiste*, *Weckruf*), out of which three titles actively advocated the propaganda by the deed (*L'Avenir*, *Action Anarchiste*, *Le Révolté*). However, even within the investigated titles, changing or shifting paradigms can be observed. Some titles incorporated positions from the whole anarchist spectrum, be it in a chronologically cascading manner (*La Voix du Peuple* from anarcho-syndicalist to anarcho-communist) or concurrently (*L'Exploitée*: anarcho-syndicalist, anarcho-socialist, and proto-anarcha-feminist; *Jahrbuch der Freien Generation*: anarcho-communist, anarcho-socialist and anarcho-syndicalist; *Almanach du Travailleur*, *L'Union Syndicale*, *Bulletin de l'Ecole Ferrer*: anarcho-communist and anarcho-syndicalist).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the application of collective identity theory in anarchist studies results in a detailed and differentiated picture of anarchists and therefore reflects the central aspect of non-dogmatism in the anarchist movement that placed people at its nucleus rather than ideology. It incorporates shared values as much as it leaves room for factions and even contradictions in a social movement without declaring it as *per se* failed or dysfunctional due to a lack of coherence, a defined canon of works, or an all-encompassing ideology. In analyzing the movement's key mode of communication and consciousness-raising, a sketch of an agile, multifaceted "we" comes about that is consolidated and consolidating itself on the basis of a consensual, yet negotiable, set of core values. It is these variable and adaptable sets that allowed the anarchist collective identities to coagulate, to fortify themselves, and to adjust to occurring and recurring tasks and problems without losing its soul and credibility.

The elucidated mosaic that emerges from looking at the management of anarchist groupness through the lens of collective identity theory is but one satisfying outcome. Within this broad spectrum, covered through the various productive mechanisms at work in the elaboration and maintenance of the movement's collective identity, it becomes clear that it has to be analyzed not just as an element of, but as an integral pillar for, anarchism itself. With its ability to simultaneously create, integrate, and maintain a vast number of movement-relevant abstracta, collective identity chiefly helps to incorporate new topics, ideas, and forces as well as to preserve existing subjects of discussion key to the movement. Through this, it can (re-)motivate seasoned militants already part of the movement as well as to attract and integrate new comrades and thus to add significantly to its social cohesion. Collective identity thereby perpetuates the movement in two ways: firstly, with regard to its content, and secondly with regard to its personnel by functioning as a motivational factor. Thus, anarchist collective identity can be seen not only as the embodiment of the movement's substrate, but also as a key factor in the establishment and re-establishment of the anarchist movement itself. One might therefore conclude that "we" in an anarchist context is more than just a pronoun: "We" is for anarchism.

## Notes

1. Tolerance should not be confused with disregard. As files of the political police show, cantonal as well as federal observation by police forces was tight. See the corresponding files of the political police in the Swiss Federal Archives in Berne, BAR E21/14041-14060. For introductory purposes see also Johann Langhard, *Die anarchistische Bewegung in der Schweiz: von ihren Anfängen bis zur* (Berlin: Salzwasser-Verlag GmbH, 2013 [1903]); Gabriele Voser, 'Anarchismus'—ein Reizwort in der öffentlichen Meinung: *erörtert an Hand der Verwendung der Anarchie-Begriffe in "Spiegel" und "Weltwoche" in den Jahren 1968 und 1975.* (Frankfurt: Haag u. Herchen, 1982); Iris Hutter, and Stefan Grob, "Die Schweiz und die anarchistische Bewegung, dargestellt am Wirken und Leben von Michael Bakunin, Sergei Netschajew und Errico Malatesta," in *Zuflucht Schweiz: Der Umgang mit Asylproblemen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. C. Goehrke and W. Zimmermann (Zürich: H. Rohr, 1994), pp. 81-120; Max Nettlau, *Geschichte der Anarchie*. Vol. 1-5. Reprint from 1925. (Berlin: Bibliothek Thélème Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1993-1996); Nino Kühnis, *Anarchisten! Von Vorläufern und Erleuchteten, von Ungeziefer und Läusen: Kollektive Identität einer radikalen Gemeinschaft der Schweiz 1885-1914*. Unpublished Dissertation. (Zürich, 2012), pp. 115-164.
2. Kühnis, pp. 380-430.
3. Hutter & Grob, pp. 111-112.
4. For examples, see Langhard, pp. 60-62.
5. Art. 70 of Switzerland's Federal Constitution allowed the expulsion of any foreigner who endangered Switzerland's inner or outer peace. This rather large interpretational scope proved to be an effective solution. Large numbers faced expulsions, sometimes for as little political activity as the distribution of flyers.
6. Swiss Anarchist Acts came into force in 1894 and were extended in 1906. For more details see Robert Lesch, *Die Anarchistengesetze der Schweiz vom 12. April 1894 und 30. März 1906 und ihre Verarbeitung im Vorentwurf zu einem schweizerischen Strafgesetzbuch* (Borna-Leipzig: R. Noske, 1919).
7. Police forces would inform employers if their employees were anarchists, which often lead to dismissal. See "Selbstbiografie eines Schweizers in Paris," *Der Vorposten* 1:2 (1906).
8. Werner Portmann, *Die wilden Schafe: Max und Siegfried Nacht, zwei radikale, jüdische Existenzen* (Zürich: Unrast Verlag, 2008), p. 63.
9. See Kurt Bürgin, *Statistische Untersuchungen über das schweizerische Zeitungswesen 1896-1930*. (Leipzig: Moltzen, 1939), p. 29.
10. Press free of charge not included. See Edi Kradolfer, *Pressevielfalt Schweiz: Ein Überblick* (Neuchâtel OFS, 2007), Table 1, p. 25.
11. Bürgin, p. 43.
12. For bibliographic information on the respective titles see Kühnis 2012. All titles can be consulted in archives in Zurich, Lausanne, Geneva, Berne, La

- Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland), Nuremburg, Germany and Amsterdam, The Netherlands. For anarchist newspapers published in Switzerland in Italian from 1872-1914, see: Ismaël Zosso, *La presse anarchiste italienne publiée en Suisse: 1872-1914*. Unpublished Diploma (Université de Lausanne, 2001).
13. See Mathieu Deflem, "'Wild Beasts Without Nationality': The Uncertain Origins of Interpol 1898-1910," in *Handbook of Transnational Crime and Justice*, ed. Philip Reichel (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 275-285.
  14. For an extended paraphrase of collective identity theory, its debates, its strengths and its weaknesses, particularly in regard to researching nineteenth- and twentieth- century anarchists, see Kühnis, pp. 30-82.
  15. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Rational Choice*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 2.
  16. For other examples of uses of collective identity, see Kühnis, pp. 165-379.
  17. *La commission du journal*, "Nous continuons...", *La Voix du Peuple* 1 13 (1906), p. 1.
  18. Comparisons of anarchists with William Tell, who is at one point even referred to as an anarchist himself [*"l'anarchiste d'Uri," La Voix du Peuple* 5:36 (1910), p. 2] occur regularly in the anarchist press.
  19. Similar acts of recuperation can also be observed in other titles in a religious context and, in the case of *Le Boycotteur*, in an anti-Semitic context.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERPRETING, DECONSTRUCTING  
AND DECIPHERING IDEOGRAMS  
OF REBELLION:  
AN APPROACH TO THE HISTORY OF READING  
IN PUERTO RICO'S ANARCHIST GROUPS  
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH  
CENTURY, 1899-1919<sup>1</sup>

JORELL A. MELÉNDEZ BADILLO  
TRANSLATED BY JAN M. ALBINO CONCEPCIÓN

*(Leyendo) 'La emancipación de los trabajadores obra ha de ser de los trabajadores mismos.' (Cierra el libro) ¡Santas palabras que condensan toda una verdad hermosa, todo un mundo de enseñanzas encerrado en una sola aspiración!*

—Redención by José Limón de Arce<sup>2</sup>

In 1985 the sociologist Rubén Dávila Santiago inquired in his book *Teatro Obrero en Puerto Rico*: “¿Cómo y para qué recordar esas voces que denunciaban...la explotación y la miseria en medio de aplausos y banderas rojas?”<sup>3</sup> With this bold question emerged an opportunity to explore how the workers conceived themselves. Dávila's objective was clear and, in my opinion, should be examined. During the period this objective was developed, the figure of the worker was at the heart of debates and studies within a small intellectual vanguard because it represented an element that had been largely excluded from the official Puerto Rican historiography and thus could open a window to comprehending history in a different way. This chapter is supported by a rich historiographic base, mostly produced by the aforementioned intellectuals, and will be helpful in analyzing and understanding this era. It will also allow the reader to reformulate the

question that Rubén Dávila developed 27 years ago: How can we comprehend the construction of the rhetoric used by workers to critically question their immediate historical situation? How did they interpret their own exploitation and misery? How did a piece of red-dyed cloth (the red flag) come to have meaning for these workers? The questions can even go further: Where did the symbology and narrative they used to comprehend and, ultimately, to critique their reality come from? If to attribute it all to chance and historical spontaneity sounds absurd, then it should be apparent that it was an active and deliberate interpretation of symbols—that is to say, of language, either written or spoken—that allowed workers to construct these codes and narratives. (In this chapter I will focus on written language rather than verbal communication since, although they are intrinsically linked, currently there is no appropriate method for analyzing the latter.)

Now, then, what is reading? Though it may seem like a simple question at first, it is shown upon analysis to be extremely complex. The act of reading is a process of signification and comprehension of information or established ideas through a sequence of symbols and codes. Its complexity is owing to the fact that “we order the world according to categories that we take for granted simply because they are given. They occupy an epistemological space that is prior to thought, and so they have extraordinary staying power.”<sup>4</sup> Foucault argues that “language partakes in the worldwide dissemination of similitude and signatures,” and this is why “it must... be studied itself as a thing in nature.”<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, even though the act of reading occurs daily in multiple situations, it remains largely a mystery. Robert Darnton argues that “the experience is so familiar that it seems perfectly comprehensible. But if we could really comprehend it, if we could understand how we construe meaning from little figures printed on a page, then we could begin to penetrate the deeper mystery of how people orient themselves in the world of symbols scattered around them by their culture.”<sup>6</sup> Even though there is no exact explanation of what the action of reading entails—because a global psychological and neurological explanation does not exist<sup>7</sup>—it must be stated that reading is not a uniform action and, most importantly, has undergone multiple transformations over time. The focus shouldn’t be limited to the action of reading and its hermeneutic process, but on the relationship between books and their readers. This digression is helpful because even though the scope of this chapter precludes an exhaustive look into the history of reading, it does not intend to provide a macroanalysis (which I feel is ultimately necessary). This chapter consciously rejects the notion that those we are studying, who were born and lived more than 100

years ago, felt, acted, and thought exactly as we do. Consequently, “we constantly need to be shaken out of a false sense of familiarity with the past, to be administered doses of culture shock.”<sup>8</sup> Let us take, as an example, the previously mentioned red flag. It was not only used in public events, but was also utilized as decor in anarchist venues<sup>9</sup> and used often as a motif in literature. In a poem by Juan José López, the author not only makes a distinction between the socialist ideal and the anarchist ideal, but after making this distinction, speaks in an emotive way about the “*Lucha Roja*” [Red Struggle] as a symbol of anarchism.<sup>10</sup> In the same way, Luisa Capetillo referred to the anarchist ideal as the “*Espectro Rojo*” [Red Specter].<sup>11</sup> Although the black flag has been historically associated with the anarchist movement and the red flag with various forms of socialism, the anarchists originally used the red flag as a symbol of their ideology. As Louise Michel, an anarchist who fought within the Paris Commune, explained: “Lyon, Marseille, Narbonne, all had their own Communes, and like ours [in Paris], theirs too were drowned in the blood of revolutionaries. That is why our flags are red. Why are our red banners so terribly frightening to those persons who have caused them to be stained that color?”<sup>12</sup> Although this demonstrates the intrinsic relationship between socialism and anarchism on an international level, we should point out that in 1899, when May Day was celebrated for the first time in Puerto Rico, the workers who hoisted red flags<sup>13</sup> were most likely doing so to represent the anarchist ideal.

Nonetheless, the *raison d'être* of this chapter can, and should, be questioned. Its intention is to analyze the way these workers read in order to clarify their understanding and interpretation of the historical context in which they were situated as well as the social imaginary that they created in order to decipher the systems of symbols and narratives imposed upon them. We believe, as Foucault expressed, that “the proper function of knowledge is not seeing or demonstrating; it is interpreting,”<sup>14</sup> and this is what we will try to articulate: an interpretation of the past. We are interested in language because we consider it an element or tool of power that is negotiated between the social groups that hold power and the subaltern elements of society. This is to say, the domination and control of the elements and symbols that dictate what will be considered as culture and the way that other marginal groups interpret it has been jealously guarded and imposed coercively on others by a small group of individuals. Such a group, usually complicit with the government, possessed the means to publish books and newspapers monopolizing the printing press, for example, which made its way to Puerto Rico at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Having said that, when the concept of a Puerto Rican culture, or

a sense of national pride in the island, is mentioned—both of which developed during the nineteenth century—these concepts refer to a small group of intellectuals who were wealthy enough to study abroad and, thus, to construct and codify a national narrative. Nonetheless, this narrative did not penetrate the collective consciousness until several decades after. In this view of history, the subaltern groups were not included because they lacked even the most rudimentary concepts necessary to develop a narrative that could replace or oppose the perceived “high culture.” It is within this antagonistic situation that the working class developed. I do not pretend to offer an exhaustive study of it, but I am interested in exploring the world of the workers from a different perspective and in asking questions that will stimulate the imagination of the reader.

After Spain experienced the social unrest that undermined its political structure in 1868—and in subsequent years, for example, during the establishment of the First Republic of Spain in 1873—the State initiated a process of negotiation with different sectors of society that had been ignored in the past. This process of negotiation gave certain freedoms to workers which they took advantage of immediately. The rights to free association and a free press were given by decree. Tired of being on the sidelines of the progress experienced by other sectors, the workers started their own pedagogical projects independently of the State. There was, for example, a group called *Sociedad Protectora de la Inteligencia del Obrero* [Society for the Protection of the Worker’s Intelligence] which described itself as “*un proyecto que ha de traer por consecuencia, el levantamiento intelectual de la clase obrera, haciéndose fuerte y respetable á[sic] la vez que [brinda] una garantía para el porvenir, no nos queda duda alguna que saldremos adelante con nuestro proyecto, que representa hoy por hoy nuestro orgullo, y que nuestra voz ha tocado hoy al corazón de los verdaderos puertorriqueños.*”<sup>16</sup> In accordance with their own narrative, they wanted to garner *respect* from the groups that had hitherto enjoyed monopolistic access to language. The latter was a remnant of the medieval society that dominated Puerto Rico for more than four centuries. Along the same lines, educational reforms were carried out in 1880 which, according to Fernando Picó, benefited the various sectors of society that had been previously ignored, including girls, peasants, and adolescents.<sup>17</sup> This made the literacy rate increase to such a level that in the 1910 census, half of the people living in urban areas and born after 1880 were literate.<sup>18</sup>

This chapter’s starting point, which I have written about elsewhere,<sup>19</sup> is that anarchism was a popular ideology within the Puerto Rican working class during the evolution of what later became known as the labor movement. In essence, workers were not only aware of the existence of anar-

chism but in many cases also embraced that ideal and made it their own (as in the cases of Juan Vilar, Venancio Cruz, Luisa Capetillo, and Ángel María Dieppa, among others). These individuals not only theorized about how to create a more equitable society through the abolition of the capitalist economic system, but also put theory into practice by organizing unions as well as pedagogical projects like study centers, commonly known as *Centro de Estudios Sociales* [Center for social Studies], which eventually sprang up all throughout the island.<sup>20</sup>

Even so, two issues of great significance should be noted. First, the historical subject of this study is tied to its immediate historical reality, which at the same time is shaped by its distinct development in a particular geographic territory—in this case, the island of Puerto Rico. As much as this historical subject denies the State and its politics, as extolled in the anarchist tradition, it was still subjected to the reality of both. In this specific case, colonialism, for example, is a crucial factor in the construction of the social imaginary because the socializing agents responsible for codifying reality were responding to colonialism's particular interests. In turn, colonialism plays a role in the structuring of a system in which various levels of domination are established on the basis of race, gender, and class. These expressions of domination even manage to permeate the narratives of the subaltern classes. In other words, the historical subject, the worker, is conditioned by various networks of hierarchical power that not only manifest themselves physically but also in the intellectual and ideological domains. Secondly, and paradoxically, the process through which the social imaginary of the worker develops in this era is at the same time situated within a particular global-cultural moment. That is, although these relations are specific to the particular, and very complex, historical context of Puerto Rico, they must also be understood in relation to the more general proliferation of anarchist ideals around the globe, from whose influence the island itself was not exempt. This chapter is interested in the role that reading played within this complicated network of processes.

To achieve this objective, we must inquire into the intended audience of anarchist literature. Even before this, we must determine exactly how much anarchist literature actually existed in Puerto Rico. The time period studied, 1899 to 1919, was one of enormous intellectual sophistication within the working class, during which newspapers as well as creative works (e.g., plays, poetry, and songs) were produced.<sup>21</sup> It is within the more general context of subaltern literature that the anarchists tried to develop their own vision, narrative, and discourse.<sup>22</sup> In contrast with the hegemonic literature, and even in some cases with the subaltern literature, the

anarchists used the written language to advance their cause and spread their ideas. Here is a list of anarchist books written in this time period:

- Capetillo, Luisa. *Ensayos libertarios*. Arecibo: Tipografía Real Hermanos, 1907.
- —. *La humanidad en el futuro*. San Juan: Biblioteca Roja, 1910.
- —. *Mi opinión sobre las libertades, derechos y deberes de la mujer como compañera, madre y ser independiente*. San Juan: Biblioteca Roja, 1911.
- —. *Influencia de las ideas modernas*. San Juan: Tipografía Negrón Flores, 1916.
- Cruz, Venancio. *Hacia el porvenir*. San Juan: Tipografía La República Española, 1906.<sup>23</sup>
- Dieppa, Ángel, M. *El porvenir de la sociedad humana*. San Juan: Tipografía El Eco, 1915.
- López, Juan José. *Voces libertarias*. San Juan: Tipografía La Bomba, s.f..<sup>24</sup>
- Plaza, Enrique. *Futuro*. San Juan: Tipografía El Lápiz Rojo, 1920.<sup>25</sup>
- Vilar, Juan. *Páginas libres*. San Juan: Editorial Antillana, 1914.

So there was anarchist literature in Puerto Rico—but who was its intended audience? In the first place, it should be noted that during this time, reading was mostly a privilege of the wealthiest classes. During the 1890s, it is estimated that only 15 to 20 percent of the population in Puerto Rico knew how to read or write.<sup>26</sup> By 1910, as mentioned before, half of the people in the urban areas were literate. In addition, the working class contained several factions; the artisans, for example, enjoyed some benefits that other workers did not, and they did not want to abandon these benefits even as they were undergoing a process of proletarianization rooted in industrialization and the entry of the Puerto Rican economy into the capitalist system of the United States. Before the currency change on the island, which worsened the economic condition of the subaltern sectors, a rural worker could earn between one dollar to one dollar and fifty cents for a day's work (typically ten or eleven hours).<sup>27</sup> If you subtract two dollars from the total to pay the rent for an empty house with a leaky roof,<sup>28</sup> you would be left with five dollars to cover all remaining expenses. Books, or pamphlets, had a cost of about one to five cents per copy;<sup>29</sup> the newspapers would cost one to two cents and magazines such as *Luz y vida* would cost ten cents per copy. Having said this, it was difficult for workers to acquire copies of any of these publications. The small amount of money that was left, when they could find it, was set aside in order to survive. In addition, the working relationships of rural laborers with their employers took on an essentially paternalistic form: the boss was the one who provided them work, which in turn allowed them to bring food to the table, the workers felt

obliged to be submissive and obedient toward the boss. Not only did workers experience physical and material limitations, such as not having enough money to purchase radical literature or not knowing how to read; they were also disinclined to risk the little that they had by condemning their eminently contradictory relationship with the master. Furthermore, the extreme anti-theological orientation of anarchism was seen as a spiritual threat, violating both morality and the law. This association between the physical and the spiritual is captured perfectly in the play *La emancipación del obrero* by Ramón Romero Rosa in which a priest explains to an old man named Pedro that “*El amo es más que el padre que le ha dado a uno el sér [sic]. Y quien reniega del amo, reniega de Dios mismo*”.<sup>30</sup>

The artisans, however, enjoyed a few financial and educational privileges that allowed them easier access to these kinds of publications. Due to a higher educational level, which is not necessarily linked to the public education system but to their own pedagogical projects, they did not resort to paternalistic discourses or dogmatic narratives to comprehend their immediate reality. It comes as no surprise that the anarchist ideal had numerous sympathizers in the tobacco and printing sectors. This shows how access to literacy is a power relationship that permits the development of independent identity through the creation of a libertarian discourse. Although there were inequitable power relationships and elements of separation even in the subaltern classes, the workers who managed to develop their own ideas and create a distinctly anarchist language tried to relate to other workers by way of a universally appealing discourse that emphasized common aspects of the struggle (e.g., poverty, lack of jobs, and lack of access to other privileges that were enjoyed by a select few).

The anarchist literature was directed to the progressive elements in the Puerto Rican working class and the artisan sector that fought against proletarianization. The purpose of the writers was clear and precise: they did not want to be a part of a high culture, as was the case with other “organic” intellectuals like José Elías Levis Bernard, who managed to be part of the central committee of the Writers and Artists Association in Puerto Rico.<sup>31</sup> Rather, they wanted to spread anarchist ideas to other worker organizations. This desire is present in the prologue of *Hacia el porvenir* by Venancio Cruz:

If you profess socialist or anarchist ideas, I do not have anything to tell you; you already know what your duty is, as a conscious man or woman: to propagate through any means at your disposal our newspapers, our books, and our pamphlets.

Even if you hold religious ideas to a mind-numbing degree, do not allow yourself to be too quickly disgusted [by anarchist ideas]. I urge

you to read this small work thoroughly and to the best of your ability so that you are able formulate an opinion on it.

If you have political idea... do not instigate controversies without analyzing the topics that I develop here with the best intentions. If you are a consumed pessimist who does not want to reason because you are bothered by reason, go back to your own life and escape the confusion that incapacitates you. If you are none of the above, or if you are an idiot or a good-for-nothing, please make an effort at least to appear diligent and pay attention to this humble work.<sup>32</sup>

The objective of the author is clear from the prologue of his book. His intention was to disseminate a narrative that could provoke different reactions depending on the reader. The decoding of the written language represented to these readers an opportunity to progress towards a more just and equitable society. Within a teleological discourse that was mixed with blunt positivism, it was thought that society was part of an evolutionary project that would inevitably be directed towards emancipation. To this end, people had to be freed of their shackles, not merely physically but mentally as well. In this way, reading permitted the anarchists to liberate themselves from the ignorance to which they were subjected. Because reading was synonymous with the elite, the workers were trying to regain and redistribute power that had been stolen from them. This is clearly demonstrated in the graphic design of the book *Voces libertarias* by Juan José López. In addition to being idealistic in content, the form of the book demonstrates the author's appreciation of the value of reading and books in general. The cover shows a gleaming printing press hovering over the world and various books in the clouds. It presents the production of literature, and knowledge in itself, as a quasi-messianic force that transcends the terrestrial globe, a symbol that goes beyond the physical limitations of humans and which has, at the same time, the capacity to liberate them from physical and mental bondage.

The newspaper *Voz Humana* gives a more concrete answer to the question of audience. This newspaper, which served as the mouthpiece for a group of anarchists from the town of Caguas, printed a correspondence list that indicates its readership. Despite its administrative tone, this list includes messages by, and descriptions, of subscribers, which allows us to gain a better sense of who was reading the publication. In an edition dated September 2, 1906, a list of 80 people that bought the prior edition was printed<sup>33</sup>—a high number for an anarchist publication at this time. The list also indicates that some people ordered several copies, like “J.H de Bayamón” to whom 100 copies of the September 30 editions were sent.<sup>34</sup> Copies were sent to the towns of Cayey, Juncos, Lares, Ponce, Bayamón, Utu-

ado, Naguabo, San Juan and even La Habana, in Cuba.<sup>35</sup> These details are mentioned to demonstrate the pervasive anarchist literary presence across the island.

If it is taken for granted that a large part of the readers was from a sector that had certain privileges among the subalterns and the marginalized—for example, the *tabaqueros* (tobacco workers) and those who worked in printing houses—then we must consider how these readers carried out the process of decoding and interpreting the written language. Apart from theorizing about possibilities and coming up with different interpretations, we can look to a historical character from this period to answer the question. Ángel María Dieppa suggests that the reading process was made posible by a fundamental disposition of solidarity: “¿Cómo podríamos leer siquiera, si no fuera por la solidaridad de las letras primero, de las sílabas después, y, de las palabras luego y, si no fuera por los hombres que nos han precedido, que uniendo sílabas y palbras[sic], le han dado impulsos al progreso y a la ciencia?”<sup>36</sup> For the anarchist, the act of reading transcended physical and neurological capacities, moving beyond the material plane directly to solidarity. It should be noted that solidarity was not construed as a mystical plane, but understood in terms of the scientific positivism that was in vogue at the time among Puerto Rican anarchists. Influenced by the written works of Kropotkin, they tried to present the act of solidarity as something inherently natural.<sup>37</sup> This is important because, given our interest in the act of reading among workers, the analysis derived from Kropotkin’s thesis demonstrates that they had previously had access to his work and, obviously, read him.

The question of how people read in the beginning of the twentieth century should be approached with caution since, as we said before, there is a predisposition to understand the past on the basis of the present without taking into account the historical evolution of reading. Individual reading was made possible by a person’s ability to pool their resources and buy books; by the availability of free time; and by access to private space. Reading within the marginalized sectors, where we find the anarchists, had a different and eminently social dynamic. As an example, let us look at the readers in the cigar factories. The environment in these factories fostered a special pedagogical project, which will be important to the elaboration of their ideas and the construction of their social imaginary. In his *Memorias*, Bernardo Vega tells us of this practice:

*[El lector] leía una hora por la mañana y otra por la tarde. El turno de la mañana lo dedicaba a la información cablegráfica: las noticias del día y artículos de actualidad. El turno de la tarde era para obras de enjundia, tanto políticas como literarias. Una Comisión de Lectura sugería*

*los libros a leer, los cuales se escogían por votación de los obreros del taller. Se alternaban los temas: a una obra de asunto filosófico, político o científico le sucedía una novela. Esta se seleccionaba entre las obras de Emilio Zola, Alejandro Dumas, Víctor Hugo, Gustavo Flaubert, Julio Verne, Pierre Loti, Vargas Vila, Pérez Galdós, Palacio Valdés, Dos-toievsky, Gogol, Gorki y Tolstoy.*<sup>38</sup>

Reading in the factories was exported to Tampa and Puerto Rico after an anarchist named Saturnino Martínez started this process in La Habana.<sup>39</sup> According to Arturo Bird Carmona, the tobacco workers in the factory *La Ultramarina* had incorporated this practice in Puerto Rico by 1890.<sup>40</sup> They paid a worker out of their own pockets to read to them from a platform for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.<sup>41</sup> On several occasions, they would not only read the abovementioned authors but also the works of Malatesta, Kropotkin, Bakunin, and Marx.<sup>42</sup> Once the reading ended they would discuss the ideas presented until the conclusion of their work shift.<sup>43</sup> This is why the workers described the factory, in their own words, as “a school or university.”<sup>44</sup> The reader assumed such an importance that, in 1897, after ending a strike that lasted five days, workers who discovered that their reader was suspended upon returning to work forced the managers to negotiate his return. Ultimately, they managed to bring back the reader on the condition that the books read were for recreational purposes only. The workers accepted the terms but in practice everything went as before.<sup>45</sup>

Apart from these historical details, we need to focus in greater detail on how workers read, which will help us in trying to understand how they interpreted the process of reading. In this case, reading did not mean the individual act of interpreting printed symbols but instead was an attempt to construct meaning through oral communication. Once the reader interprets the words and brings them to life through intonation, the members of the audience decode and interpret the reader’s words in an individual manner. This is a highly dialectical process involving the interaction of various cognitive elements. Each worker constructed his or her own interpretation according to his or her own concept of reality.

The first part of the day was dedicated to readings about the most important events in the news. This was crucial for the workers not only because it helped keep them informed but also because it gave them equal footing in conversations with other people outside of the workplace. Being informed about daily goings-on provided these workers with an intellectual advantage over other workers who did not feel it was necessary to know more than what their profession required of them. In other words, knowledge functioned as a negotiation between the tobacco workers, for

example—who belonged to a sector that looked at homogenization as a threat—and the well-off social groups that possessed unhindered access to a good education. The figure of the reader in the factory did not simply use reading as a mechanism to keep the workers distracted while they were doing their jobs but served as an opportunity to provide enlightenment, knowledge, and, even more important for this study, exposure to the written language. Take, for example, Luisa Capetillo. Being a woman in a highly sexist society, she was fortunate to be employed for a time as a reader in the factories, where she gained knowledge and access to education in a different way.<sup>46</sup> Capetillo's experiences invested her with a form of power that was denied to most male workers of her time. For instance, through informal meetings in her home, where women were normally segregated from the men, she was the only woman capable of participating effectively in discussions with the men (this was due in part to her fluency in French). As a result, Capetillo was exposed to the language of the privileged class. This is an example of how access to education gave workers the ability to negotiate using the symbols and the language of the upper classes.

The second part of Bernardo Vega's account sheds light on what the workers were reading at the time. In addition to daily news events, they were also interested in learning about world literature. It is peculiar that the list presented by Vega, and later commented on by Arturo Bird Carmoña, only mentions European intellectuals. According to Epifanio Fiz Jiménez, these readings "contributed to breaking the chains that would tie down the great enslaved masses of the old Europe."<sup>47</sup> This shows how modernism spread across the more progressive sectors of the working class and materialized in a rapacious Occidentalism. Lists of books found in the study centers are useful for showing not only what was read in the tobacco factories but also in the anarchists groups in Puerto Rico, which is the focus of this essay.

In addition to contributing to the formation of workers' identity, reading helped codify their social imaginary. It is through the reading of radical texts that they begin to understand concepts such as *revolution* and, at the same time, to condemn others like *exploitation*. To some workers, these ideas appeared foreign. In the play *La emancipación del obrero* by Ramón Romero Rosa, for example, a character known as "the foreigner" is the one who expounds revolutionary ideas.<sup>48</sup> Of course, this did not stop anarchist and revolutionary reading material from being distributed throughout the island. Partly, this was owing to the assistance of study centers or reading circles. One of these was the *Centro 11 de marzo* (the May 11th Center) in Bayamón,<sup>49</sup> whose directors included Alfredo Negrín,

José Tormos, Ramón Barrios, José Acosta and Epifanio Fiz Jiménez.<sup>50</sup> This center was founded, according to Fiz Jiménez, “in memory of the labor leader Adolfo Reyes, who was killed by a scab in Comerio Street.”<sup>51</sup> It housed a library and contained “various shelves with books and a long table surrounded by seats; on its walls were hung red flags and pictures of the most distinguished members of the movements emerging in Europe.”<sup>52</sup> Here workers could read various radical publications from Europe and America. They displayed photos of “Pedro Kropotkine [sic], Karl Marx, Miguel Bakunin, Máximo Gorki, Anselmo Lorenzo and various others...”<sup>53</sup> on the walls. They propagated the ideas that they learned at the center through daily meetings in Comerio Street, Vista Alegre, Calle Street, Santa Cruz, and in the town’s plaza.<sup>54</sup> In short, the kind of reading and analysis made possible by the study centers had concrete objectives. In the town of Caguas the study group *¡Solidaridad!* was even more militant within the worker’s movement. This was, as described by Rubén Dávila, “a space for discussion and ideological formation, a nucleus of agitation and propaganda, a base for organizing solidarity for the struggles being generated, and a means to make contact with struggles in other nations.”<sup>55</sup>

We may assert, without any hesitation, that the act of reading within these spaces was very different from the individual form of reading that we have today. In addition to a propagandistic purpose, reading had a social orientation. It also gave the workers a language to comprehend and interpret their surroundings. For the anarchists, ideas such as syndicalism, the worker’s struggle, and the revolution were situated in a teleological historical framework in which the future would inevitably triumph over the past; this led workers to view these concepts as natural and inherent aspects of their lives. Even so, the workers would internalize these elements and think of them as natural only when they were immersed in the specific rhetoric acquired through written language. A comment made by Pedro Grant, a labor leader, immediately comes to mind in this regard: “no one is born a syndicalist.”<sup>56</sup> Despite the simplicity of this remark, it provides an apt description of how revolutionary education functioned during this period. The concepts that the anarchists proclaimed in their speeches, plays, and pamphlets were coded constructions and, consequently, not natural. For this reason, the study center played an essential role in constructing the workers’ social imaginary because it was here that they began to invest abstract concepts with meaning and to construct the narrative that allowed them to make sense of their world. The act of reading out loud, coupled with the debate and discussion that followed, were key elements in this process. Robert Darnton argues that throughout history, books have had more listeners than readers and that is why television is probably a

smaller breakthrough than what is generally imagined.<sup>57</sup> Study centers provided instruction to workers in the arts, sciences, and other fields of human endeavor which had previously been denied to workers in precarious economic situations and monopolized by the wealthy classes. This was not an act of charity but one based on solidarity and mutual support, both of which are key elements in anarchist discourse.

The popularity of reading in general and the demand for anarchist and radical literature in particular are reflected in the number of printing houses that were established on the island, whose revolutionary spirit is exemplified in their names no less than their publications. A list of a few of them:

NAME	LOCATION
Aurora	Mayagüez
Unión Obrera	Mayagüez
Unión Obrera	Puerta de Tierra
La Bruja	Mayagüez
La Industria	San Germán
Montalvo	Mayagüez
Gente Nueva	Mayagüez
Real Hermanos	Arecibo
Biblioteca Roja	San Juan
Negrón Flores	S.l.
Listín Mercantil	San Juan
La República Española	San Juan
El Eco	San Juan
Conciencia Popular	Humacao
El Carnaval	San Juan
Vida Libre	Caguas
Federación Libre	San Juan
La Tribuna	Ponce

Figure 1: A list of a few printing houses in Puerto Rico at the beginning of the twentieth century<sup>58</sup>

To this list we could add several other printing houses which, though lacking a name, were known to publish newspapers and pamphlets in abundance. Many of these were makeshift operations motivated by the need to print more literature of this kind. They were located inside private homes and had only the basic resources necessary to accomplish their goal. Flyers, programs, pamphlets, and newspapers were printed as well as books.

A more thorough analysis of these and other printed materials can shed light on the reading habits of workers. Flyers, for example, were more common during this time because they were used for many purposes (e.g., denouncing injustices like the stealing of salaries or the expulsion of fellow workers from the factory; warning about counterproductive or harmful tendencies within the worker's movement, etc.).<sup>59</sup> These flyers were reproduced in various sizes but were usually quite large to facilitate the reading of the contents out loud. The anarchist books, on the other hand, were different from the flyers in terms of size. They were commonly smaller and had hard durable covers that allowed them to be easily carried anywhere. In the beginning of the play *Redención* by José Limón de Arce, the main character, Pedro, is reading a book under a tree.<sup>60</sup> This breaks from the traditional idea that the act of reading is restricted to the private confines of a home and shows that books were reproduced with the intention of providing mobility to the words.

When one inspects the anarchist texts produced on the island, one finds more than a desire to develop a unique discourse based on the immediate historical conditions of Puerto Rico. It is easy to detect in them, for example, the influence of foreign intellectuals like Kropotkin, Malatesta, Proudhon, Tolstoy, and Bakunin. Comparing the references to these intellectuals which appear in Puerto Rican literary works of the time to the lists of books provided in distros such as *Germinal* and *La Reforma Social*, it becomes clear that the island was very much plugged into an international literary and political culture. The process of reading in an individual way or reading out loud was only a part of the alternative pedagogical projects created by the workers in line with Francisco Ferrer y Guardia's libertarian teaching philosophy. Independent of its particular forms, reading was synonymous with instruction. Through reading in general workers could escape their suffering and, in the case of anarchist literature in particular, dream of a better tomorrow. As has been mentioned before, the literature produced in Puerto Rico during this time exhibits a teleological vision of utopian futures which influences the way workers understand and interpret their reality. At the same time, reading in the context of more radical circles offered an element of power to the literate which was the envy of the illiterate.<sup>61</sup>

In closing, reading was extremely important for the formation of the anarchist movement and the radicalization of the workers in the beginning of the twentieth century. This essay did not attempt to answer all the questions it posed nor pretend to offer an exhaustive analysis. Instead, it offers a preliminary sketch of a new analysis of the workers' experience. Rather than describe historical facts, as has been done frequently and excellently

over the past several decades, this chapter challenges us to rethink labor studies and anarchist studies in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican collective imaginary during the first decade of the twentieth century is a highly complex phenomenon that emerged from a varied array of historical factors. If it is hard to comprehend the construction of this imaginary as it existed for the common worker, then it is even more difficult to do so as concerns anarchist workers. This is why this chapter, along with my other works, aims to uncover the origins of Puerto Rican anarchism, which has been buried in historiographic silence for far too long. If this text stimulates any curiosity within the reader on this score, it has succeeded.

## Notes

1. The original text was written in Spanish. Jan Miguel Albino González was responsible for its translation.
2. "(Reading) The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves. (Closes book) Holy words that condense a beautiful truth, a whole world of teachings contained in a single aspiration." See Rubén Dávila Santiago, *Teatro Obrero en Puerto Rico (1900-1920)* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1985), p. 106.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 10. "How and why should we remember the voices of those who denounced exploitation and misery in the midst of applause and red flags?"
4. Michel Foucault, quoted in, Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), p. 192.
5. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 35.
6. Darnton, pp. 215-216.
7. Robert Darnton uses, as an example, the multiple forms of reading which exist among different cultures. See Robert Darnton, "Historia de la lectura," in *Formas de hacer historia*, ed. Peter Burke (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2009), p. 203.
8. Darnton, p. 4.
9. Epifanio Fiz Jiménez, *Bayamón y su gente: Datos del Bayamón de ayer y hoy, estampas y datos biográficos* (San Juan: Ediciones Rumbo, 1960), p. 127.
10. Juan José López, *Voces libertarias* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Tip. La Bomba, N.d.), p. 7. Emphasis by author.
11. Luisa Capetillo, "Situación del trabajador puertorriqueño," in *Amor y anarquía: Los escritos de Luisa Capetillo*, ed. Julio Ramous (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1992), p. 89. Emphasis by author.
12. Quoted in Infoshop: Your Online Anarchist Community, "An Anarchist FAQ," <http://www.hardcore.lt/anarchistfaq/append2.html> (Accessed: June 15, 2011).

13. Erick J. Pérez Velazco, "Los orígenes del Primero de Mayo en Puerto Rico: Notas y documentos," in *Claridad, Suplemento En Rojo* (April 28-May 4, 1989), p. 24.
14. Foucault, p. 40.
15. See Antonio Pedreira, *El periodismo en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1969).
16. "A project that will create as a consequence the blossoming of the worker's intellect, by becoming strong and respectable while providing a guaranteed future. We have no doubt that we will move forward with our Project, which represents today our pride, and we hope that our voice will be heard by the real Puerto Ricans." "*Sociedad protectora de la inteligencia del obrero*," *El obrero* (November 10, 1889), p. 2.
17. Fernando Picó, *Historia general de Puerto Rico*, 5th edition (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1990), p. 213.
18. *Ibid.*
19. See Jorell Meléndez Badillo, "Expresiones anarquistas dentro de la prensa y la cultura proletaria puertorriqueña de principios del siglo XX," *Kálathos: Revista Transdisciplinaria Metro-Inter* 6:1 (May-October 2012), [http://kalathos.metro.inter.edu/Num\\_11/expresiones%20anarquistas.pdf](http://kalathos.metro.inter.edu/Num_11/expresiones%20anarquistas.pdf). Also Jorell Meléndez Badillo, "Voces libertarias: The Economic, Political, and Social Discourse of Puerto Rican Anarchism, 1900-1917," *Theory in Action: The Journal for the Transformative Studies Institute* 5:4 (October 2012), pp. 6-12.
20. Concerning the centers created by the workers, the following text is essential: Rubén Dávila Santiago, *El derribo de las murallas: Orígenes intelectuales del socialismo en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Cultural, 1988).
21. The most complete bibliographical work around the topic is Erick J. Pérez Velasco, *Bibliografía sobre el movimiento obrero puertorriqueño, 1873-1940* (San Juan: Centro de Investigaciones académicas [CEINAC] de la Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, 1992). For an analysis of workers' literature, with emphasis on some anarchist writers, the following is essential: Carmen Centeno Añeses, *Modernidad y resistencia: Literatura obrera en Puerto Rico, 1898-1910* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2005). In relation to theater, see Rubén Dávila Santiago, *Teatro obrero*.
22. Some of the anarchist writers were Juan Vilar, Venancio Cruz, Ángel María Dieppa, Juan José López and Luisa Capetillo. Newspapers included *Voz Humana* and *Humanidad Libre*, among others. In relation to this topic, see Jorell Meléndez Badillo, *Expresiones anarquistas dentro de la prensa y cultura proletaria puertorriqueña de principios del siglo XX, 1899-1911* (New York: El libro libre, 2011).
23. Even though this author has a previous book (*Fragmentos*, San Juan: Tipografía Listín Mercantil, 1903), his earlier work does not have a strong anarchist tendency, as in the case of *Hacia el porvenir*.
24. Although Erick J. Pérez Velazco dates this book to 1910, in the text the author criticizes some anarchists' position in relation to the First World War. Hence,

it was published after the date suggested by Velazco.

25. Even though we have not consulted this book—which was, according to Erick J. Pérez Velazco, published in 1920—we recognize that the author was active in anarchist circles and various labor organizations in the municipality of Caguas. Rubén Dávila Santiago mentions that Enrique Plaza wrote a play called *El Anarquista* and “the manuscript for this play was seized by the police during the raid [of Caguas in 1911] and was partially destroyed. When it was recovered by E. Plaza, he had to rewrite it while eliminating some parts and modifying others in order to publish it. The result was the drama *Futuro*.” See Santiago 1985, note 6, p. 217. Our translation.
26. Henry K. Carroll, *Report on the Industrial and Commercial Condition of Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Fundación Puertorriqueñas de las Humanidades, et. al., 2005), p. 33.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-52.
28. *Ibid.*
29. “Folletos de venta en esta administración,” *Voz Humana* (September 2, 1906), p. 2.
30. “The master is more than a father; he gives us the reason for our being. And who renounces the master, renounces God himself.” Ramón Romero Rosa, “*La emancipación del obrero*” in Santiago 1985, p. 53.
31. General Archive of Puerto Rico (G.A.P.R.), “*Reglamento general de la Asociación de Escritores y Artistas de Puerto Rico aprobado en la asamblea celebrada el 19 de diciembre de 1906*,” Personal Collection 25: Junghamns, Box: 79.
32. Venancio Cruz, *Hacia el porvenir: Ideales humanos y libres* (San Juan: La república española, N.d.), 1.
33. *Grupo Solidaridad!*, “*De administración*,” *Voz Humana* (September 6, 1906), p. 4.
34. *Ibid.*, September 30, 1906, p. 4.
35. *Ibid.*, September 2, 1906; September 30, 1906; October 22, 1906.
36. “How could we even read were it not for the solidarity between the letters first, then the syllables, and then the words, and if not for the men who preceded us who by unifying syllables with words, giving science and progress an impulse?” Ángel María Dieppa, *El porvenir de la sociedad humana* (San Juan: Tipografía El Eco, 1915), pp. 24-25.
37. Peter Kropotkin, *La selección natural y el apoyo mutuo* (Libros de la catarata, 2009).
38. “He would read an hour in the morning and another in the afternoon. The morning shift was dedicated to cabled information: news of the day and articles related to the moment. The afternoon shift was for substantial works, either political or literary. A ‘Reading Commission’ would suggest the books to be read, which were then voted on by the workers in the factory. Topics would be altered; a novel succeeded a philosophical political, or scientific work. They would choose from the works of Emile Zola...”. Cesar Andreu Iglesias, *Memorias*, ed. Bernardo Vega (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán,

- 1977), p. 60.
39. Frank Fernández, *El anarquismo en Cuba* (Madrid: Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2000), pp. 24-25.
  40. Arturo Bird Carmona, *Parejeros y desafiantes* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 2008), pp. 36-37.
  41. Jiménez, p. 124.
  42. Carmona, p. 106.
  43. Jiménez 1960.
  44. *Idem*.
  45. Carmona, pp. 36-37.
  46. For analyses of Luisa Capetillo the following are invaluable: Norma Valle Ferrer, *Luisa Capetillo: Historia de una mujer proscrita* (Río Piedras: Editorial Cultural, 2010) Also: Julio Ramos, *Amor y anarquía: Los escritos de Luisa Capetillo* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1992).
  47. Jiménez, p. 124. Our translation.
  48. R. del Romeral, “*La emancipación del obrero: Drama alegórico en un acto*,” in Santiago, pp. 47-70.
  49. Jiménez, p. 127.
  50. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
  51. *Ibid.*, p. 127. Our translation. Even though the author argues that the event took place in 1908, we have evidence that it happened on March 11, 1911. See: *La Correspondencia*, March 11-12, 1911.
  52. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.
  53. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
  54. *Ibid.* For a great number of publications and flyers, see G.A.P.R., Junghamns Collection, boxes 99-100.
  55. Santiago, p. 146. Our translation.
  56. See *Pedro Grant: La vida una lucha, una lucha la vida. Memorias de un líder sindical*, ed. Ramón Arbona Martínez and Armindo Núñez Miranda (Puerto Rico: Ediciones Callejón y Archivo Sindical Santiago Iglesias Pantín en la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Humacao, 2005), p. 3.
  57. Darnton, p. 202.
  58. Pérez Velasco, pp. 13-23.
  59. G.A.P.R., “*A los trabajadores en general*,” Junghamns Collection, Box 99, File 805.
  60. Santiago, p. 105.
  61. In a conversation in José Limón de Arcé’s play *Redención*, María tells Pedro that “the reading of that book has deranged your brain.” See Santiago, p. 109. In that same play, Pedro is accused by others of assimilating to the powerful classes simply because he was reading a book. A worker by the name of Flor says, “[It is as] if he was studying to become mayor! Instead of taking his machete or his plow, he passes the day laying down reading.” (Original quote: “*Ni que estudiara pa Alcalde! En vez de estar con machete ó el arao en la tala, se pasa el día tumbao leyendo.*”) See *ibid.*, p. 111.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# METHODS FOR TRACING RADICAL NETWORKS: MAPPING THE PRINT CULTURE AND PROPAGANDISTS OF THE *SOVVERSIVI*

ANDREW HOYT

In 1913, war had not yet broken out across the Western Hemisphere, and the cities and towns of the United States were swelling with a constant flow of migrants from Europe—workers, refugees, exiles, dreamers, and wanderers that made their way across the Atlantic on the steam-powered vessels of the late nineteenth-century world. One of the largest of these immigrant currents originated in Italy; it followed migrant chains, kin-based contacts, and various social networks from the Mediterranean to the mines, forests, fields, and factories of North America. The landscape these men and women moved through was complex, shaped by varied physical and economic, cultural, and ideological geographies. Navigating circuitous routes and often making repeated trips across the ocean, these were transatlantic migrants who developed a uniquely transnational identity during these years of mobility, instability, and conflict.

Interwoven with networks of migrant workers and embedded in immigrant enclaves, networks of Italian radicals, or “*sovversivi*” (subversives), organized everything from food cooperatives to union drives, militant strikes to political bombings and assassinations. All that remains of this radicalism, aside from police files and population records, are flakes and fragments of the *sovversivi*’s cultural production, which included newspapers, books of poetry, theater scripts, art, and political polemics buried in archives or frozen in time on rolls of micro-film. While the names of a few important writers, labor organizers, bomb throwers, and orators have lingered at the edges of historical consciousness, the full complexity of the lives of those who worked week after week publishing papers, supporting collectives, distributing propaganda, and donating money to the struggle remain largely unknown. The structure and com-

plexity of their networks have never been fully examined and their relationships to the larger migrant chains in which they were embedded remains only vaguely understood.

The Italian term “*sovversivi*” refers not to a single ideology but was a catholic term with which anarchists, socialists, syndicalists, and communists all identified. While *sovversivi* was the label with which the radicals identified, police and employers more often labeled them as “*malfattori*,” or common criminals.<sup>1</sup> The history of persecution of Italian radicals was deeply connected to a state system that viewed them as akin to “*mafiosi*,” whereas the *sovversivi* conceived of themselves as highly cultured and moral citizens fighting for the collective good of humankind without consideration for personal profit. Thus, *sovversivi* refers to a broad category of people who shared a long history of being misrepresented and persecuted by the state.

This unifying experience fostered deep interpersonal bonds, sympathy, and identification among radical members of the Italian immigrant community thereby enabling communication and coordination among people who might have disagreed on many specific ideological and tactical questions. In this chapter, I will largely focus on the cluster of individuals and collectivities often referred to as the “*Galleanisti*.” As Italian anarchists associated with Luigi Galleani’s newspaper the *Cronaca Sovversiva* (*The Subversive Chronicle*), the *Galleanisti* have typically been analyzed in the context of major strikes, acts of violence, or their ideological writings, a fact that has left the human geography of the community, and especially its connections to *sovversivi* of differing ideologies and political strategies, unmapped and unexplored.

## Problematizing the Historiography

Descriptions of the Italian radical community have largely been based on the polemic debates and ideological divisions expressed by major radical writers or organizations. The interpersonal connections that knit various branches or sub-groups of radicals into a larger whole, creating their identities as *sovversivi*, have typically been overlooked. Admittedly, previous scholarly work such as biographies, event-investigations, institutional labor narratives, examinations of intellectual discourses, and larger multi-method surveys have all provided information on these radical immigrants. However, each method reveals only certain facets of their lives. For example, biographies such as Nunzio Pernicone’s work on Italian anarchist and propagandist Carlo Tresca does an excellent job at following a single life-thread as it moves across social networks, space, and time.<sup>2</sup> However, the

many interpersonal bonds such excellent scholarship discovers are not followed outward, away from Tresca, or interlaced with other adjoining networks; all we see are points of connection along a single line, rather than the web-work of a larger community.<sup>3</sup>

Works that focus on particular moments of conflict, such as Beverly Gage's *The Day Wall Street Exploded* or Thomas Andrew's exploration of the Ludlow massacre, *Killing for Coal*, do a wonderful job at giving us a glimpse of the riotous fruit of the radical movement; however, they have difficulty showing everyday lives of militant workers whose actions culminated in these historical displays. On the other hand, institutional labor histories like Howard Kimeldorf's study of the IWW, *Battling for American Labor*, tend to focus on organizations in a way that privileges union affiliation and workplace battles over interpersonal relationships, everyday life, and the informal exchanges which are often the glue that holds together networks and communities.

Larger surveys of anarchist history, such as Nunzio Pernicone's essential study, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892*, effectively contextualize anarchist activity through a combination of methods; however, this work too shapes the historical narrative around major events, debates, collaborations, and biographies in a way that reifies ideological categories and the importance of specific organizations or prominent men. This approach renders the more subaltern, grass-roots *sovversivi* into homogenized followers of ideas, rather than as complex and independent historical actors in their own right. By contrast, work done by historians such as Paul Avrich, from his oral history project *Anarchist Voices* to his detective work on Sacco and Vanzetti's anarchist background, has been sensitive to the loss of marginalized voices.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, cultural histories by scholars such as Salvatore Salerno, Jenifer Guglielmo, and Marcella Bencivenni have helped us see how migrants and rebellious workers interacted with their world, bringing to light previously unexamined archival sources and a host of new questions. From the art of the Wobblies to the various survival tactics Italian women brought with them when immigrating to New York City, this work highlights the importance of everyday life and cultural production without uncovering or mapping the social geographies that allowed the *sovversivi* to reproduce themselves and to react to external pressures.

While the existing historiographical focus on ideological identity over interpersonal relationships is partially a result of the character of *sovversivi* discourse, and partially caused by the methods and questions employed by scholars examining them, it is also derived from the still relatively sparse academic work on these radicals. This problem has been noted by scholars

who are interested in print culture and the transnational networks created by various ethnic/regional branches of the anarchist movement. Recently, historians such as David Turcato, Steven Hirsch, Kenyon Zimmer, Kirwin Shaffer, Devra Weber, Jacinto Barrera Bassols, David Struthers, and Evan Daniel have begun a closer reading of anarchist propaganda from this period. Given the geographic spread and linguistic diversity of the transnational anarchist movement, this work requires the cooperation of numerous scholars working all over the world.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter I offer a method that might encourage collaboration among historians interested in the *soversivi* while also revealing how this method changes our understanding of the *soversivi* themselves.

### A Methodological Solution to a Distorted Historiography

My intention is to point to a way forward, to encourage the kind of research and collaborations needed to more fully recover the history of this exceptional and transnational era of mobilization from below. To do this, I examine several pieces of Italophone anarchist print culture in order to discover connections between the people and groups involved in the production of radical propaganda. By working outward from pamphlets and newspapers to the individuals and collectives responsible for their production, I hope to show a way to map and diagram the nodes and clusters of radical networks, thus highlighting the bonds between what are often described as oppositional ideological camps.<sup>6</sup>

The chapter is meant to demonstrate a methodology by providing a preliminary, if still limited and incomplete, snap-shot of the New England-based *Galleanisti* branch of the Italian *soversivi*, in the year 1913. Ideally, many network-maps, sketched in the manner I describe below, can be drawn, linked, and analyzed over time. When these cartographies of subversion are placed into a temporal framework they will function like the slides of a flip book, providing a mechanism for illustrating and explaining change over time; eventually allowing the image of the *soversivi* community to move and react to external forces such as government oppression, like an organism reacting to environmental pressures. Such a chronological display of network diagrams would help scholars to see how the *soversivi* responded to moments of crisis, conflict, deportations, the banning of periodicals, and the imprisonment of propagandists.

This approach highlights a number of different types of weak and strong bonds—from informal businesslike collaborations to deeply personal and long-lasting friendships that knit *soversivi* into a community—and helps demonstrate how the network circulated nutrients, such as food

to hungry strikers and money to legal defense funds. As the network is mapped and then historiographically contextualized, future scholars should be able to better analyze the way various bonds functioned and supported the community. Thus, this work will speak not only to researchers interested in the *Galleanisti* or the *sovversivi* but to readers concerned with how radical social movements in general sustain themselves and define themselves over time and in the face of frightful and overwhelming odds.

### Demonstrating the “Pamphlet Outward” Method

An investigation of the propagandists involved in printing pamphlets such as *Madri d'Italia!* (*Mothers of Italy!*) published in Lynn, Massachusetts, *La Responsabilita' e la Solidarieta' nella Lotta Operaia* (*Responsibility and Solidarity in the Worker's Struggle*), published in Barre, Vermont, and the anarchist newspaper *La Cronaca Sovversiva* (*The Subversive Chronicle*) identifies many concrete and detailed characteristics of the *Galleanisti* network and its connections to a wider of *sovversivi*. These pieces of print culture will be at the center of our map, with spokes moving outward, from the printed words to the propagandists behind their manufacture.<sup>7</sup> As the relationships between these various nodes emerge, additional linking lines will be drawn between them, revealing a web-like social structure which clusters around certain propaganda projects but which is also characterized by key interpersonal bonds that bridge subgroups and branches of the larger community.

### The Lynn Pamphlet: “*Madri d'Italia!*”<sup>8</sup>

When one observes the pamphlet, *Madri d'Italia!*, it is not hard to imagine the clatter of the printing press and the ink-stained hands of the men who held the freshly printed paper almost one hundred years ago. The faded cover contains a portrait of Augusto Masetti, a young man with bushy hair, a well-trimmed mustache, and large, sympathetic eyes.<sup>9</sup> The “[CA]” etched into the portrait is the signature of Carlo Abate, Italian artist and immigrant to Barre, Vermont. Above the picture are two typefaces; the top one reads “*Mentana*.” “*Mentana*” is the pen name of Luigi Galleani.<sup>10</sup> Galleani chose *Mentana* as a pseudonym to remember the 1867 Battle of Mentana between Garibaldi's republican volunteers and French soldiers fighting for the Pope during the struggles for Italian unification.<sup>11</sup> Below the portrait is a different, and even smaller, typeface that reads “Lynn, Mass.—*Tipografia della Cronaca Sovversiva*.” The pamphlet thus introduces the first two people connected to the pamphlet, Carlo Abate and

Luigi Galleani, and the name of the collective they were publishing under, *Tipografia della Cronaca Sovversiva*. On the network map, lines can now be drawn radiating away from the pamphlet, creating a brief initial glimpse of the relationships behind the Galleanisti propaganda projects.

Interpersonal relationships were essential to the production of this pamphlet. While I cannot offer a full biography of Galleani and Abate, they constitute important nodes in the network I will map. Carlo Abate, the artist, immigrated to Barre, Vermont in 1901 where he became a local activist, campaigning against the work conditions created by the introduction of dust-generating pneumatic drills in the granite sheds.<sup>12</sup> Many of his friends, carvers who transformed his plaster sculptures into granite statues, were dying from silicosis at painfully early ages. In 1903, two years after Abate's arrival, Luigi Galleani also settled in Barre.<sup>13</sup> Their collaboration on the newspaper *Cronaca Sovversiva* began on Blackwell Street, in the Italian section of Barre not far from the train tracks and the Socialist Labor Hall.<sup>14</sup> In 1912, Luigi Galleani moved to Lynn, Massachusetts, where the shoe factories employed numerous Italian immigrants predisposed to listen to his radical message.<sup>15</sup> The following year, 1913, the pamphlet "*Madri d'Italia!*" was printed by the *Tipografia della Cronaca Sovversiva* in Lynn.<sup>16</sup>

The back cover of the pamphlet "*Madri d'Italia!*" advertises Abate and Galleani's long-running collaborative project, *La Cronaca Sovversiva*. The pamphlet praises the newspaper as something "every worker should read" and refers to the *Cronaca Sovversiva* as "one of the better revolutionary newspapers published in the Italian tongue." The advertisement also states that *La Cronaca Sovversiva* was founded ten years prior, in 1903, and comments that the paper is "recommended to workers by Pietro Kropotkin, Eliseo Reclus, Emma Goldman, Jean Grave, Carlo Malato, Amilcare Cipriani, and other courageous agitators of the International Anarchist Movement."<sup>17</sup> This is a notable list which spans several ideological branches of anarchism, a first suggestion of *sovversivi* unity often obscured by historians who focus on the dramatic arguments between the *Galleanisti* and other radical groups.

The title page of *Madri d'Italia!* restates the author's pen name, *Mentana*, and the title of the pamphlet. Below the title, there is a prominent line that reads: "(per Augusto Masetti)." Below this line, the price ("5c") is printed in the largest typeface of the whole pamphlet, with "*la copia*" in smaller text below the number. The final lines of text are found at the bottom of the page; printed in rather small typeface, they locate the publishing house in Lynn, Massachusetts, where it was produced "*A cura della Cronaca Sovversiva e degli anarchici di Plainville, Pa*" (edited by

the *Cronaca Sovversiva* and the anarchists of Plainsville, Pa.). This is followed by the date of publication, 1913. The information that can be harvested from the pamphlet's cover and title pages thus provides significant clues concerning the *Galleanisti* network. Among other things, the title page tells us that this pamphlet was written by Galleani, illustrated by Carlo Abate, and was the result of a joint venture with the anarchists of Plainsville, Pennsylvania, in reaction to the imprisonment of Augusto Masetti.<sup>18</sup>

By extracting these clues from the pamphlet rather than focusing on its content, we turn the direction of research away from polemic debates and the categorization of propagandists based on intellectual affinities with differing factions of the *sovversivi*.<sup>19</sup> Our goal is not to analyze the text but to glimpse the people who manufactured it and map the connections among them.<sup>20</sup> The method reveals ever more strands and groups, complicating our understanding of the *sovversivi* and telling us about the interpersonal connections between radicals.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Barre Pamphlet: “*La Responsabilita' e la Solidarieta' nella Lotta Operaia*”<sup>22</sup>**

Like the Lynn Pamphlet, the Barre Pamphlet is held together with two rusting staples. However, the Barre Pamphlet's cover contains no figurative artwork, and there are no images decorating the interior text.<sup>23</sup> Rather than a piece of art, *La Responsabilita' e la Solidarieta' nella Lotta Operaia* (Responsibility and Solidarity in the Worker's Struggle) contains a rather elaborate set of titles scrolling down its faded light blue-green cover. Significantly, the largest and darkest print on the cover is again the listed price, “5c la copia” (5 cents a copy), placed below the titles and in the center of the page in exactly the same format and font as the title page of the Lynn pamphlet. The degree of similarity in layout cannot be accidental and suggests some direct connection between the two pamphlets, at least at the level of print design and physical construction.

The original author of this text was the Austrian-born anarchist-historian Max Nettlau. Nettlau worked closely with the Geneva-based Freedom Group, a collective that included the Russian geographer Peter Kropotkin, an association that carried great intellectual weight within anti-authoritarian communities. The front of the pamphlet lists the publisher as “*Casa Editrice L'Azione*” (Action Publishing House). One possible reason that the Barre Pamphlet provides multiple references to well-known anarchist groups, such as the Freedom Group in Switzerland, is that *Casa Editrice L'Azione* lacked name-recognition and was a collective of behind-

the-scenes propagandists rather than of a long-familiar orator like Galleani.<sup>24</sup> Robert D'Attilio believes that the *Casa Editrice L'Azione* worked with the “Gruppo Autonomo di East Boston” (East Boston Autonomous Group).<sup>25</sup> The East Boston Autonomous Group would later come to be considered one of more militant anarchist collectives in New England.<sup>26</sup> Robert D'Attilio describes them as one of the most “active, sustaining groups” in *La Cronaca Sovversiva*'s community.<sup>27</sup>

Similar to the Lynn Pamphlet, the back of the Barre Pamphlet features advertisements: the first is for a “*Settimanale di Critica e Propaganda Rivoluzionaria*” (weekly periodical of revolutionary criticism and propaganda) entitled *L'Azione*; the second is for a series of small pamphlets available from the “*Biblioteca di Propaganda*” (Library of Propaganda).<sup>28</sup> These publications are offered at similar rates to the Barre and Lynn pamphlets.<sup>29</sup> These advertisements suggest that the propagandists behind the Barre pamphlet were also involved in printing the periodical *L'Azione*.<sup>30</sup>

Dirk Hoerder's 1987 annotated bibliography of the immigrant labor press in North America cites the founder and editor of the periodical *L'Azione* as Felice Guadagni.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, only a single October 4, 1913 copy of *L'Azione* has survived. It suggests an affiliation with the Italians who participated in the syndicalist wing of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).<sup>32</sup> *L'Azione* strongly attacks electoral socialism and has a section called *Dai Campi d'Azione* (From the Field of Action), which reports on labor issues and includes letters from readers/activists. Guadagni had previously written for the large anarchist Italian-language socialist/IWW paper *Il Proletario* in the early part of 1913, but was reportedly fired for having mishandled the paper's funds.<sup>33</sup>

Although Felice Guadagni's association with the Barre-based *L'Azione* suggests that in 1913 he was living in Vermont, he appears again in the historical record in Boston as editor for *La Notizia*, in 1920.<sup>34</sup> In fact, Guadagni is reported to have had lunch with Nicola Sacco, of Sacco and Vanzetti, the day of the Braintree shooting which led to the famous trial of the two Italian anarchists.<sup>35</sup> Sacco and Vanzetti are of course two of the most renowned associates of Luigi Galleani and contributors to his journal *La Cronaca Sovversiva*.<sup>36</sup> The interpersonal link between Guadagni and Sacco bridges the chasm intellectual historians of radicalism draw between organizationally focused anarcho-syndicalists like Guadagni and anti-organizational insurrectionary anarcho-communists like the *Galleanisti*.<sup>37</sup>

The interior pages of the pamphlet offer more interesting pieces of information. On the reverse side of the title page, opposite the first page of the text, is a small credit to “Stamp. Edit. C. A. Bottinelli/ Barre, Vermont 1913” and a label “typographical / Barre, Vt.,” which confirms that Bot-

tinelli's print shop was a member of the typographical union. Bottinelli is listed in the Barre city records as the printer for *La Cronaca Sovversiva* in 1907.<sup>38</sup> It is likely that he provided the press connection responsible for the similar typeface and format of the two pamphlets' title pages.<sup>39</sup> Bottinelli was at the very least a sympathizer and business associate of both *Tipografia della Cronaca Sovversiva* and the *Casa Editrice L'Azione*.

If the Barre Pamphlet is included as another central wheel in our map, it extends connections outward from the pamphlet to *Casa Editrice L'Azione*, the propagandist Guadagni, the printer Bottinelli, and the *Biblioteca di Propaganda Rivoluzionaria*.<sup>40</sup> *Casa Editrice L'Azione* and Guadagni are linked together through the publication of the periodical *L'Azione*. Bottinelli is tied to not only Galleani's newspaper *La Cronaca Sovversiva* and to the Barre Pamphlet, but possibly, through the use of the same typeface for the pamphlet price, to the Lynn pamphlet *Madri d'Italia!*. These are not links or connections which would jump out at a researcher focused on Galleani's biography, the intellectual history of anarchism, or the story of a major strike or a specific act of violence. Characters like Bottinelli would be unlikely to be of interest yet the role such people played, as connective tissue linking otherwise unaffiliated *sovversivi* collectives together, becomes visible with other methods.

Pushing further the examination of print culture, more connections become apparent, and it becomes easier to see the web-like structure of the *sovversivi* networks and to raise questions about analyses of radical activity that subsume groups such the *sovversivi* under stagnant and rigid ideological categories, such as syndicalist and anti-organizationalist. Social ties bound radicals together and did critical work in maintaining and nurturing all branches of *sovversivi*. Without incorporating recognition of these social ties into analysis of Italian immigrant radicals its depth and strength remain hidden and is too easily ignored.

## What Can Be Learned From The Two Pamphlets?

Even a cursory examination highlights similarities between these two pamphlets that extend beyond the similarity of their formats and price. Both covers list authors of prominence within the transnational community—Max Nettlau and Luigi Galleani (via pseudonym)—while the back covers of both pamphlets advertise newspapers and other propaganda that can be purchased from the publishing collectives. Furthermore, it is clear that both groups of anarchists used P.O. Boxes for correspondence and kept their individual legal names largely hidden from view. None of the members of either print collective, Lynn's *Tipografia della Cronaca Sov-*

*versiva* and Barre's *Casa Editrice L'Azione*, are fully named, and the groups in Plainsville are referred to generically as "*degli anarchici di Plainsville, Pa*" (the anarchists of Plainsville, PA). Such references may reflect the producers' concern with security or simply confirm the collective nature of their propaganda projects.<sup>41</sup>

When the maps of each pamphlet's network are placed next to each other, we see that the few links connecting the two sides of the diagrams come together in the form of interpersonal or inter-group relationships.<sup>42</sup> The more we dig into the propaganda produced by these groups, the more names and relationships emerge from the print evidence. For example, as the map is currently drawn, *La Cronaca Sovversiva* sits in the middle of the page rather isolated from the rest of the network. However, even a quick examination of the newspaper drastically expands the complexity of the diagram, revealing further ties that bind these clusters of propagandists, bridge ideological divisions, and map the subterranean structure of the larger *sovversivi* world.

For example, communities of *sovversivi* took root not only in large cities such as New York, but in factory towns like Lynn, Lawrence, and Patterson, as well as in remoter places like the granite sheds and quarries of Barre, Vermont or the coal mines of Plainsville, Pennsylvania. If remaining in contact with distant kin was challenging for Italy's migrants, then one can imagine that the task of building solidarity between unrelated people and mobilizing resources across great distances required a particular kind of social structure and network system. Radical newspapers filled gaping holes in the *Galleanisti* web. The consistency of papers like *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, which ran weekly for over 15 years, provides a very different kind of space for interaction and network building than a one-off pamphlet; these propaganda forums facilitated the multi-directional communication that scattered groups of *sovversivi* required in order to take collective action.

Because of this function, *La Cronaca Sovversiva* constitutes a much larger and central nodal-point in the cartography of the *sovversivi* community than do either one of the two pamphlets I have so far examined. A brief survey of even a few of the network-ties moving outward from *La Cronaca Sovversiva* to the nodes already diagrammed around the two pamphlets, adds further layers to our map. These layers show that even periodicals with partisan editorial content, like *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, were read by those who disagreed with the ideologies but nevertheless participated in a fractious community of rebels.

## The Role of Anarchist Periodicals

Tracing the *sovversivi* network through newspapers such as *La Cronaca Sovversiva* helps reveal the web of practical and intellectual exchange that held communities together and sheds increased light on the people and places that have already been identified and mapped in relation to the two pamphlets. This examination shows that radical newspapers were the major connective tissue linking the scattered nodes of the *sovversivi*'s world. They served multiple functions within these communities: facilitating the exchange of resources, the movement of people, the creation of identity, and the spread of tactics; thereby enabling large-scale mobilization to emerge around changing issues. A quick overview of *La Cronaca Sovversiva* uncovers a lengthening list of nodes in the *sovversivi* network and reveals ties that bound together numerous *sovversivi* collectives.

### *La Cronaca Sovversiva*

Even without network analysis, scholars know that *La Cronaca Sovversiva* was one of the dominant organs of militant anarchism for almost 15 years, from its inception in 1903 until its suppression, in 1918, under the Sedition Act.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the years of its printing, Abate's art set the tenor and tone of *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, contributing a visual element to strengthen Galleani's words and helping to spread subversive identity among the readers of the newspaper. One federal agent described Galleani's weekly rag as "the most rabid, seditious, and anarchistic sheet ever published in this country."<sup>44</sup> Nunzio Pernicone describes the paper as "unquestionably the best written Italian anarchist periodical of the time [advocating] every means of revolutionary violence—including assassination and bombing—against the state and the bourgeoisie."<sup>45</sup> This long-running propaganda project provides the third wheel in a bubble map of the *sovversivi* network. Linked to far more people and groups than the two pamphlets, the newspaper sat near the center of the radical community, functioning as a hub for communication and exchange, knitting together a large community in a way that seems counterintuitive when one focuses only on its ideological content.

While the anarchists associated with Galleani are often remembered for their sectarian tendencies, the newspaper's network displays far broader support for other *sovversivi*. Their network included a long transnational list of writers and political thinkers scattered across Europe, the United States, and Latin America. For example, a 1908 special edition prominently listed and advertised over 25 other anarchist newspapers, including pe-

riodicals from New York City, Barcelona, Ancona, Geneva, Lisbon, Rome, Milan, Los Angeles, San Paulo, Lima, and London. This rather open embrace of different strains of anarchism suggests that the Galleanisti were not simply the quarrelsome partisan guttersnipes they are often characterized as having been by historians.

The paper was first printed in Barre, Vermont, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, 1903.<sup>46</sup> Early editions of *La Cronaca Sovversiva* were predominately text with little or no art. The first time *La Cronaca Sovversiva* featured a masthead by Carlo Abate was in July 1907. This masthead consists of a woodblock image of five portraits of the Haymarket Martyrs.<sup>47</sup> The importance placed on the Haymarket Martyrs, and the use of Abate's portraits of these anarchist heroes, set a precedent for the way in which Galleani used Abate's art. Indeed, Abate's artistic contribution was much more than mere decoration; it was a tool for imaginatively connecting the reader to inspiring historical figures, with a range of ideological commitments, thus facilitating the formation of a historical narrative based on a broad and transnational subversive identity.<sup>48</sup> After 1912, when Galleani shifted operations to Lynn, he continued to use many of Abate's images as section headings in the paper.<sup>49</sup> This helped *La Cronaca Sovversiva* maintain visual consistency throughout its life.

## Tracing the Galleanisti Network

*La Cronaca Sovversiva* included not only news of current events but advertisements for radical literature and notices about local fund-raisers, benefits, and gatherings. Looking out from the pages of the newspaper to these connections adds further detail to our map of the *sovversivi* world. For example, on May 24, 1913, *La Cronaca Sovversiva* advertised a "picnic" by the "*Circolo Educativo Sociale di Lynn*" as a benefit for libertarian propaganda, and on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1913, the paper advertised a second "*Feste Campestre*" (barbecue) hosted by the same group. Both events promised music and dancing. Not all events were so light-hearted. In the October 4, 1913 edition of the paper, there is an announcement for the 4<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the death of Francisco Ferrer, who is called a "martyr of rational education."

This commemorative event was arranged by the Freedom Group of Boston and held at "Tremont Temple (Lorimer Hall)" in Boston. The gathering in honor of Ferrer, billed as an "international memorial meeting" and featuring speakers in Italian, English and Yiddish, was more focused on political speeches than on entertainment.<sup>50</sup> Including such connections in the map of the *sovversivi*'s network, the critical importance of papers like

*La Cronaca Sovversiva* can be seen as extending far beyond simple propaganda. While these kinds of bonds were fainter and more tentative than the close, interpersonal ones formed between people like Abate and Galleani, they nonetheless played a key role in sustaining the community and building an anarchist identity among the Italian immigrant population. There would also be a huge number of these kinds of advertisements and events linking the newspaper to peripheral nodes and less well-known collectives scattered across the country.

Galleani and other orators, such as Emma Goldman, often shared the same speaking platform in towns like Boston and Barre.<sup>51</sup> In 1913, *La Cronaca Sovversiva* printed many announcements of Goldman's speaking engagements alongside Galleani's own oration schedule. The paper also actively solicited funds to support a propaganda tour of Italy by Errico Malatesta (who is usually understood as Galleani's ideological enemy). *La Cronaca Sovversiva* regularly advertised newspapers by other major figures in the anarchist movement, such as Goldman's own journal, *Mother Earth*. Similarly, the advertisement on the back of *Madri d'Italia!* claimed support for *La Cronaca Sovversiva* from a wide range of famous anarchists, including Goldman. This creates an additional set of weak bonds, in the form of public associations, which link the propaganda projects of Galleanisti to other radicals.

One review of *sovversivi* propaganda, in the September 13, 1913 edition of *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, discusses Felice Guadagni's new radical journal, *L'Azione*. This establishes yet another layer of the connection between the publishers of the Barre Pamphlet and *Madri d'Italia!*. The article praising *L'Azione* and Guadagni is mysteriously signed with only the initial "S." and reads, in part:

*L'Azione* should find friendly welcome and encouragement from subversives and the support of intelligent workers capable of looking beyond the petty boundaries of dogma to the congregation of all manifestations of subversive thought and revolutionary action... instead of being a licensed and ordained faction or party, *L'Azione* is meant to be an organ of the working class, a free wheel between all subversive scholars.<sup>52</sup>

The review of Guadagni's work is positive and stresses the new journal's broad radical perspective. Similar to the more ephemeral threads established by small financial donations to *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, these public statements are not as deep as direct interpersonal relationships, but they are still critical to generating and maintaining a larger and heterodox community of *sovversivi*.

Some other examples of the network connections that can be seen in the printed correspondence include a June 21, 1913, edition of *La Cronaca Sovversiva* which contains a letter from the *Circolo Autonomo* in Meriden, Connecticut. This group was “constructed in Meriden between young people eager to contribute to the spread of libertarian ideas.” The Meriden group is “calling on all the subversive newspapers of Italians in the United States” for propaganda material to distribute. They request “a weekly consignment of five copies,” for which they are “pledging to pay... moderately at the end of every month.”<sup>53</sup> This gives us a hint at the way working class migrants managed to fund and distribute so much radical material as well as how new and emerging collectives might be supported by more established propaganda groups. Small notes like this could be easily overlooked by a scholar focused on Galleani’s heated rhetoric; however, by following the “pamphlet outward” approach, we can use these clues to link *La Cronaca Sovversiva* to an increasing number of radical groups and to slowly expand our map of the *sovversivi*’s world.

### Clues Concerning the Relationship between Nodes

*La Cronaca Sovversiva* contains numerous clues to relationships between nodes in the *Galleanisti* community. For example, the July 14, 1913 edition of the paper contains a small correspondence note from “*Circolo di Studi Sociali di Barre*.”<sup>54</sup> The presence of regular correspondence from the anarchists in Barre, in the pages of *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, confirms that these relationships survived after Galleani and the newspaper left Vermont.

Furthermore, evidence in the paper confirms the existence of links between the Barre-based group and other collectives associated with Galleanisti propaganda projects. This can be seen in a February 15, 1913, announcement concerning the release of a new pamphlet called *Il Portafoglio* (The Portfolio). The pamphlet, a one-act drama by Ottavio Mirbeau, was co-edited by both the *Circolo di Studi Sociali di Barre* and the *Gruppo Autonomo di East Boston*.<sup>55</sup> However, mail-orders for this publication were to be sent to the East Boston address. This collaboration shows yet another set of ties connecting the anarchists in Vermont and the group of *sovversivi* gathered in nearby Massachusetts.

In the June 21, 1913 edition of the paper, the East Boston Autonomous Group posted an announcement for their new *Bollettino di Critical e Polimica* (*Bulletin of Polemics and Criticism*), entitled *Il Movimento Anarchico* (*The Anarchist Movement*).<sup>56</sup> This shows that the East Boston group was not only re-printing classic tracts but attempting to produce a regular bulletin in which to publish its own writing, separate from yet

promoted in the pages of *La Cronaca Sovversiva*.<sup>57</sup> The advertisement provides more names for our map, such as R. Elia, G. Guzzardi, and G. Solaria, who can be associated with the East Boston Autonomous Group; this moves the anarchists in East Boston one step further away from being an undifferentiated mass of rebels and closer to being a describable community of individuals whose lives might be further revealed through the methods of social history.<sup>58</sup> If these names are fleshed out and their other affiliations and connections investigated, whole new portions of the network could come into view.<sup>59</sup> It is this kind of step by step investigation that is required to map the *sovversivi*'s world, extricating it from intellectual history's emphasis on its divisions and isolation.

Once *La Cronaca Sovversiva* moved to Lynn, there was an increase in the presence of articles, notes, correspondence, announcements, and advertisements tied to the East Boston Autonomous Group.<sup>60</sup> The paper regularly contained a list of propaganda being sold by the "*Biblioteca della 'Cronaca Sovversiva,'*" but ordered through the East Boston Autonomous Group. These clues suggest that the East Boston Autonomous Group was a major distribution hub for the Boston area anarchists and at least partially responsible for distributing propaganda printed by the *Tipografia della Cronaca Sovversiva* as well as material they produced with groups, like the *Circolo di Studi Sociali di Barre*.<sup>61</sup>

The pages of *La Cronaca Sovversiva* thus reveal the activity and character of many different collectives of *sovversivi*. The comradely and cooperative relationship between these different groups suggests that they largely funneled incoming funds towards the same projects. A methodological mapping of these relationships hints at the kinds of survival tactics and propaganda strategies that were built into the very structure of the *sovversivi*'s community, thus helping to explain the resiliency of the Italian anarchist movement and providing information concerning the marginalized or less well-known nodes in the *Galleanisti* network.

### **The Connection Between *La Cronaca Sovversiva* and *Madri d'Italia***

Besides collaborating on the production and distribution of propaganda, *Biblioteca della Cronaca Sovversiva* and the East Boston Autonomous Group also worked on benefit projects that raised funds and distributed wealth around the network. This is demonstrated with the pamphlet *Madri d'Italia!* and the *Galleanisti* network's attempt to rally behind the cause of Augusto Masetti.

On August 9, 1913, Galleani began to address the case of Augusto Masetti in the pages of *La Cronaca Sovversiva*. Around this time, letters began to appear in the section of the paper called “*Comunicati*” and, according to the ledger page of the newspaper, money began pouring in for Masetti’s benefit fund. By October 1913, Galleani decided to run a multi-page tract on Masetti, entitled *Madri d’Italia!*. For this special edition of the paper Abate contributed another of his excellent portraits.<sup>62</sup> The article and the art were later turned into the pamphlet *Madri d’Italia!*.<sup>63</sup> By December 13<sup>th</sup> *La Cronaca Sovversiva* posted a running tally of donations to a Masetti fund and, on December 20<sup>th</sup>, the East Boston Autonomous Group reported over \$200 dollars raised for Masetti’s cause.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, we discover that *Madri d’Italia!*, the pamphlet with which our investigation began, first appeared as an article in *La Cronaca Sovversiva* but rapidly became a tool for raising money for various other groups, as well as for Masetti’s own benefit fund in Italy. By working outward from the print culture, we are able to see details of how these different collectives related to each other and how they built and sustained their community.<sup>65</sup> As numerous and overlapping bonds emerge among nodes in the network the lines linking different bubbles on the map darken from weak to strong ties. In such cases, it is not unfair to assume that interpersonal relationships were established through these collaborations.

## Mapping Outward from *La Cronaca Sovversiva*

The collectives associated with *La Cronaca Sovversiva* form a heavily interconnected network where the weak ties of ideological agreement are strengthened by strong bonds between individuals like Abate and Galleani, who lived and worked near each other for many years, experienced disaster and victory, and remained in touch even after their paths diverged. The names, donations, advertisements, announcements, and correspondence embedded in *La Cronaca Sovversiva* buttress information from secondary sources used to diagram the two networks surrounding the pamphlets discussed earlier in this paper. A brief review of these links will fill in the blank spaces in our network diagram and illustrate the critical role of newspapers in knitting the community of *sovversivi* together.

If we attempt to draw onto our network-map the spokes of the wheel moving outward from *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, we find an explosion of numerous thin ties radiating in all directions.<sup>66</sup> Among the many communities which appear as donors to the paper throughout its 15 years, the anarchists of Plainville are often listed as supporters, thus linking them to *La Cronaca Sovversiva* as well as the Lynn pamphlet.<sup>67</sup> We must also in-

clude the groups whose events and propaganda are advertised, such as the East Boston Autonomous Group, the Freedom Group in Boston, the *Circolo di Studi Sociali di Barre*, the *Circolo Educativo Sociale di Lynn*, and the *Circolo Autonomo* of Meriden, Connecticut. By exploring these few connections the complex web of *sovversivi* caught up in the production and distribution of this propaganda begins to come into the light. The way in which *La Cronaca Sovversiva* linked together anarchist groups and the way different collectives shared resources hints at the many unseen interpersonal relationships which allowed this militant community to flourish.

When we include all three networks on one combined page, the map of the *Galleanisti* becomes increasingly complex.<sup>68</sup> Individuals, collectives, and propaganda projects populate the page with numerous arrows moving in multiple directions. While *La Cronaca Sovversiva* sits like a sun in the middle of the page, the thick ties binding the edges of the network together suggest a tensile strength and decentralized structure that would be resistant to easy decapitation through deportation, imprisonment, or local defeat. Additionally, the thickly crosshatched connections linking the nodes and constituent parts of this network suggest that, despite ideological disagreements, the web of interpersonal relations and propaganda projects was characterized by much greater unity than is often assumed by historians who only read the polemic debates and miss the propaganda networks that produced the print culture.

## Conclusion

It was not easy for governments and political officials to suppress the *sovversivi*. From the brutality of local police policy to federally coordinated immigration raids, from rioting jingoist mobs to the judicial assassination of Sacco and Vanzetti, conservative forces worked long and hard to break apart these *sovversivi* networks.<sup>69</sup> Descriptions based upon the polemic content of various propaganda projects depict a deeply fractured and internally incoherent and rancorous movement unlikely to have the strength to resist direct state oppression.

However, methods such as the “pamphlet outward” approach demonstrated in this chapter may help scholars to see the *sovversivi*’s structural strategies and various tactically deployed connective tissues more clearly. This may fill in blind-spots in the historiography of the lost world of Italian-American radicalism and allow researchers to begin to understand better the interpersonal relationships that were especially important in holding the disparate *sovversivi* together, especially in the face of suppression by police and state. This chapter attempts to show that, rather than focusing

on the biographies of famous individuals or historically significant organizations, any understanding of the *sovversivi* requires particular attention to the interpersonal connections and various strong and weak bonds which knit together geographically distant and often ideologically quarrelsome nodes into a larger community capable of funding large strikes, coordinating collective action, and serving an important role in the larger migrant chains in which they were embedded. The *Galleanisti* were just one branch of this family of *sovversivi*, and the work done by Galleani and Abate was echoed a hundred times over by other lesser known, shorter lived, or smaller newspapers and radical collectives.

If the immigrant enclaves of the turn of the century Atlantic world were like rapidly growing trees sprouting up across the landscape of America, then they were fed by rhizome like migrant chain roots pressing against the hard earth of granite quarries and coal mines, reaching all the way back to the “Old World.” The radical networks of the *sovversivi* were like the microscopic tendrils of mushroom mycelia, a mass of branching filaments that spread throughout the nutrient substratum, linking plants scattered across the forest floor. Anchored to the root hairs of the more visible entities, laying undetected as they did in the vital work of nourishing their communities, and only seen when the conditions were right and the social order showed signs of decay, the *sovversivi* would momentarily blossom up in dreadfully beautiful strikes, riots, explosions and conflicts. Naturally, scholars of this damp and dark world have focused on the black and red mushroom caps, often unaware of the ever-present networks hidden deep below ground, busy making possible the eye-catching display above. It is my hope that the “pamphlet outward” methodology I have described in this chapter will allow researchers to move beyond the spectacular in order to more fully understand the actual extent, structural function, and organizational complexity of the *sovversivi* networks and thus see the everyday and the interpersonal connections which allowed the *sovversivi* community to survive.

## Appendix

### Diagrams:

Diagram 1: *Madri d'Italia!* Network

Diagram 2: *La Responsabilita' e la Solidarieta' nella Lotta Operaia* Network

Diagram 3: The Two Pamphlets

Diagram 4: *La Cronaca Sovversiva* Network

Diagram 5: Combined Networks

### Legend:

Ovals represent individuals

Rectangles represent collectives

Rectangles with rounded edges represent publications

Lighter lines indicate established connections

Darker lines indicate well documented or long term collaborations or relationships

Single black arrows indicate intellectual, artistic or professional contribution

Double black arrows indicate collaborations or relationships

Single white arrows indicate mention in corresponding publication

Diagram 1: *Madri d'Italia!* Network

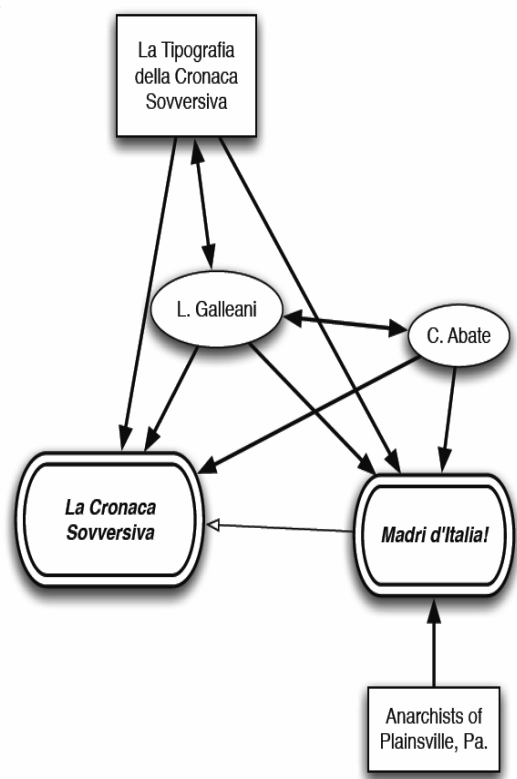


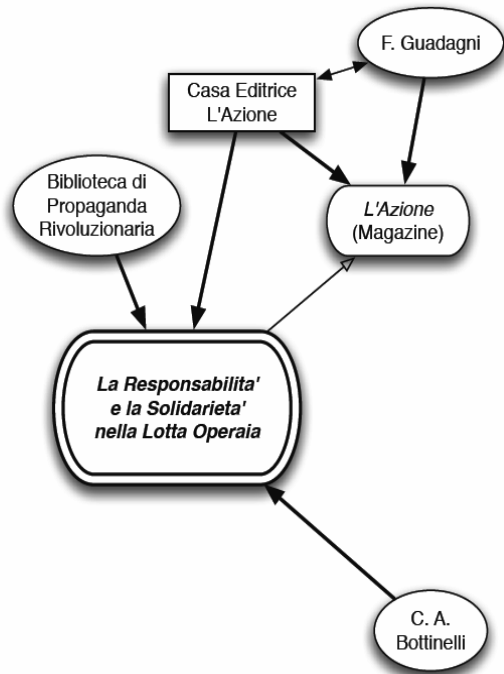
Diagram 2: *La Responsabilita' e la Solidarieta' nella Lotta Operaia* Network

Diagram 3: The Two Pamphlets

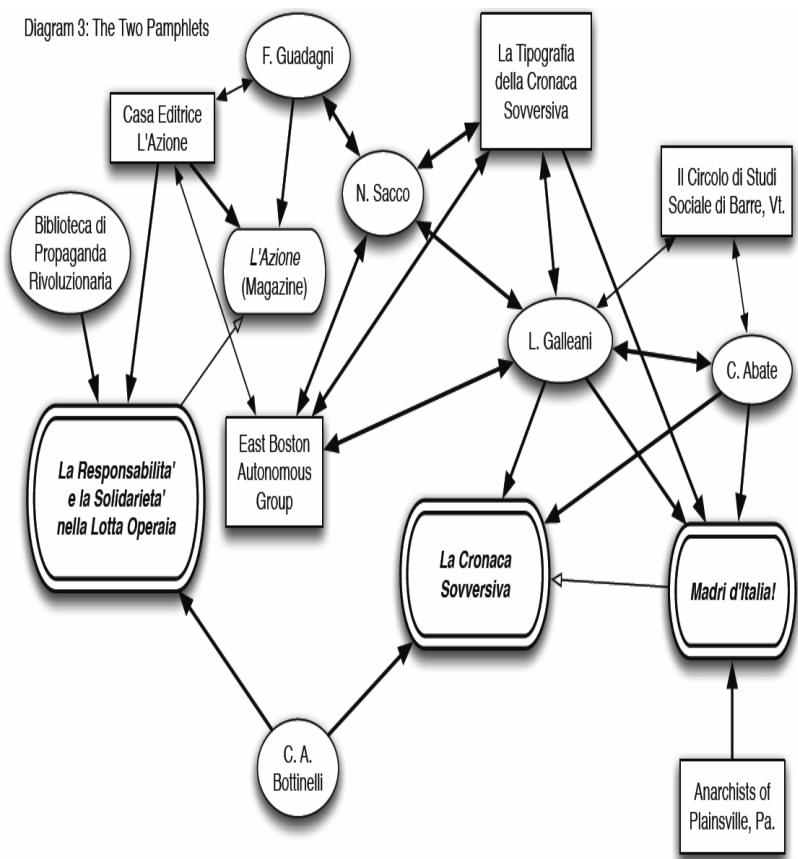


Diagram 4: La Cronaca Sovversiva Network

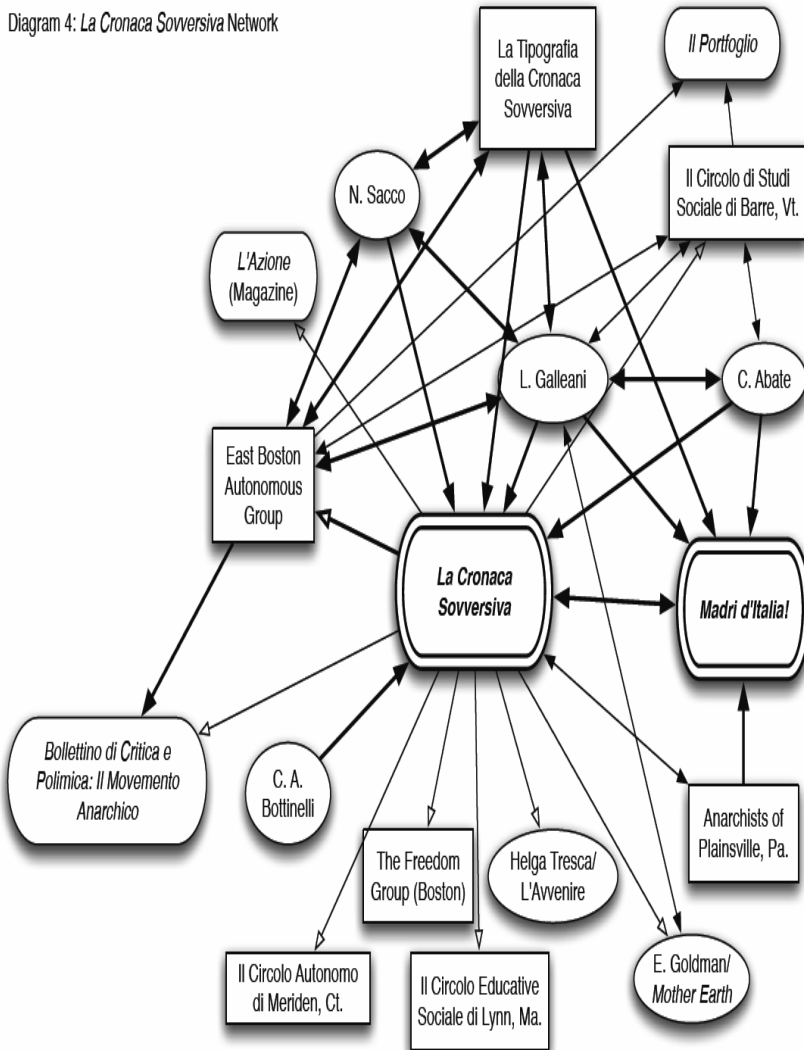
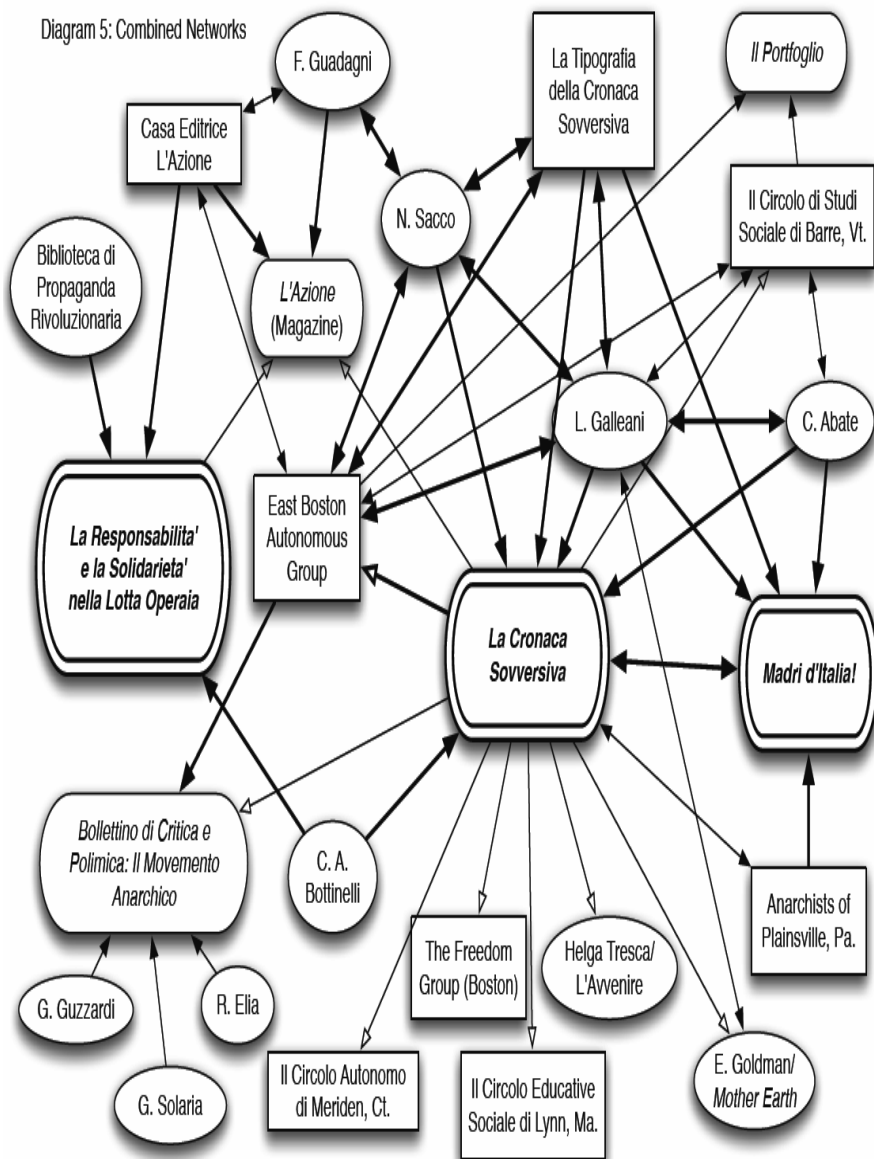


Diagram 5: Combined Networks



## Notes

1. Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), p. 132.
2. See Nunzio Pernicone's *Carlo Tresca: Portrait of a Rebel* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
3. One side effect of this narrow lens is that personal conflicts are transformed into categorical and ideological divides that appear far more rigid, permanent, and impermeable than they were in reality. Additionally, such work focuses on the most famous members of the network, creating hierarchies which hide the more complex human dynamics which existed among *sovversivi*.
4. Avrich's corpus provides one of the major sources for uncovering the nearly invisible links between members of the *sovversivi* community. See Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).
5. One model for international collaboration can be seen in collections such as *Italian Workers of The World* by Donna Gabaccia and Fraser Otanelli or *Women, Gender and Transnational lives* by Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta.
6. When I speak of nodes in the network I am referring broadly to any of the various people, groups, projects, publications, etc. which are being mapped. These nodes are then linked together by various lines of connection in order to form the web-like image of the network.
7. These periodicals share much in common. They are produced by two distinct yet overlapping nodes of the *sovversivi* network. There are also differences between the texts, printed as they were by different, although closely related, groups of anarchists.
8. Mentana, *Madri d' Italia!*, (Lynn, Massachusetts: *Tipografia della Cronaca Sovversiva*, 1913).
9. Only his upper shoulders are clearly seen, the coat and tie he is wearing only hinted at as the image fades out before touching its border. The letters [CA] appear in a box where the arm of his coat would connect with his double-breasted collar, almost as it is if pinned to the man's chest, although the artist has left this space empty in order to draw attention to his distinctive signature.
10. Travis Tomchuk, "Transnational Radicals Italian Anarchist Networks in Southern Ontario and the Northeastern United States, 1915-1940" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 2010), p. 200.
11. The Republicans were defeated in this conflict and the battle represents the Waterloo of Italian radicalism during the *Risorgimento*. Mentana is also the name Galleani gave to his youngest daughter. This suggests the great significance of this battle in the eyes of Galleani, and the ideological and imaginative link twentieth-century anarchists had with the freedom fighters of the *Risorgimento*.
12. According to Joelen Mulvaney's *Carlo Abate: "A Life in Stone,"* Abate was born in Lombardy in 1860 and immigrated to the United States in 1898. Abate

and spent three years living with family members in Quincy, Massachusetts, before moving to Barre and settling in the Italian section of Blackwell Street. Abate died at the age of 81, in 1941. A memorial was erected outside his old studio which features a bas relief portrait of the artist. *Carlo Abate: "A Life in Stone"* was written as a catalogue for an exhibit at the Barre Public Library in 1986. In preparation for this exhibit, Joelen Mulvaney, the curator of the exhibit and the principal researcher, contacted friends and family of Carlo Abate and much of what we know about his life is the result of these interviews.

13. Galleani arrived in Patterson, New Jersey in 1901. In 1902 he was forced to flee the area to avoid prosecution for allegedly instigating a militant strike by the local silk workers. During the strike, Galleani was shot by the police and he spent a short amount of time convalescing in Canada before re-crossing the border, undetected, and moving to Barre, Vermont. See Beverley Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in its First Age of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 208.
14. Abate's life in Barre contrasts with the usual depiction of a *Galleanisto*: he was a painter and schoolteacher, a community organizer, not a bomb thrower or terrorist. Understanding the deep bonds Abate built with the Italian stonemasons in Vermont adds to our appreciation of the deep roots *sovversivi* established in their local communities.
15. Galleani's decision to move was most likely caused by the vitality of the *Galleanisti* scene in Massachusetts. Robert D'Attilio comments that *La Cronaca Sovversiva* moved to Lynn so that it could be closer to the mainstream currents of modern American activism; Barre was simply too far removed from events. Robert D'Attilio, email message to author, July 5, 2009.
16. Importantly, the presence of Abate's art on the 1913 Lynn pamphlet establishes Abate's continued involvement with Galleani's propaganda projects even after Galleani's departure from Barre in 1912.
17. "*E'uno dei migliori giornali rivoluzionari che si pubblichi in lingua Italiana. Fondato nel 1903, è stato raccomandato al public dei lavoratori da Pietro Kropotkin, Elisea Recluse, Emma Goldman, Jean Grave, Carlo Malato, Amilcare Cipriani ed altri agitator valorosi del movimento Libertario internazionale.*" Mentana, *Madri d' Italia!*, (Lynn, Massachusetts: *Tipografia della Cronaca Sovversiva*, 1913), back cover.
18. Masetti was a soldier in the Bologna barracks, in Italy. In 1911, Masetti attacked a Colonel who was exhorting the troops to depart for Libya. The Colonel was injured and Masetti was committed to an asylum. See <http://www.eskimo.com/~recall/bleed/1030.htm>
19. The text of the pamphlet reveals not only the Galleanisti association with propaganda by the deed but also their continued consciousness of politics in Italy and their identification with ongoing struggles in their homeland.

20. Peripheral nodes such as Plainville need further, in depth exploration. Hopefully such smaller communities will offer up oral history and archival records of subaltern radicals currently invisible to the historian's eye.
21. See Appendix, Diagram 1: *Madri d'Italia!* Network.
22. Max Nettlau, *La Responsabilit  e la Solidarieta' Nella Lotta Operaia* (Barre, Vermont: Casa Editrice L'Azione, 1913).
23. The cover lists the publisher as Casa Editrice L'Azione (the Action Publishing House). The text is a reprint of Max Nettlau's *Rapporto letto alla 'Freedom Discussion Group' Il 5 Dicembre 1899 (Report to the Freedom Discussion Group, December 5th, 1899)*. Across the top of the Barre Pamphlet is written, "Biblioteca di Propaganda Rivoluzionaria" (Library of Revolutionary Propaganda).
24. Nunzio Pernicone has pointed out that, "Generally, any publisher whose name started with *Biblioteca* or *Libreria* was associated with a newspaper or a group. But group names were ephemeral, because the groups were here this year, gone the next." Nunzio Pernicone, email message to author, July 22, 2009.
25. The East Boston Autonomous Group was associated with Galleani and anarchists such as Nicola Sacco. "The name of Sacco appears for the first time in *La Cronaca Sovversiva* on August 6, 1913... Sacco's note... was signed Ferdinando Sacco, his actual name, and the name he always used in his dealings with *Cronaca Sovversiva*... During the next few years Sacco's name appears... attending picnics and conferences, acting in social dramas, continually raising money to aid political prisoners and jailed strikers." Robert D'Attilio. "*La Salute   in Voi: The Anarchist Dimension*," accessed May 4, 2011, <http://recollectionbooks.com/bleed/Encyclopedia/SaccoVanzetti/essayrd.html>
26. See Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca: Portrait of A Rebel*, p. 116.
27. Robert D'Attilio. "*La Salute   in Voi: the Anarchist Dimension*."
28. The back cover of the Barre Pamphlet also includes a short list of other publications that are part of this series, including: *Studio su l'Individualismo* (Study on Individualism), *Lavoro e Surmenage* (Job and Overwork), and *Il Vangelo dell'Ora* (The Gospel of Now). These are also reprints of famous anarchist texts.
29. The "*Abbonamento alla prima serie di dieci volumetti di propaganda*" (Subscription to the first series of ten small volumes of propaganda) asks for a 35 cent "*pagamento anticipato*" (advanced payment); the mailing address included is the same as that for *L'Azione*.
30. This was offered in 1914, for an annual fee of \$1.00, or semi-annual subscription for \$.50. The back of the Barre pamphlet referred to this item as a "*settimanale di critica e propaganda Rivoluzionaria*" (weekly magazine of critic and revolutionary propaganda).
31. Dirk Hoerder, ed., *The Immigrant Labor Press in North America, 1840s-1970s; Volume 3: Migrants from Southern and Western Europe* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 44.

32. The IWW avoided political divisions and was composed of a wide range of radicals, thus further blurring the lines between branches of the *sovversivi* network.
33. See Hoerder, p. 44.
34. *La Notizia* comes up in reference to the Sacco and Vanzetti Defense Committee. See:  
[http://www.bpl.org/research/rb/sacco\\_and\\_vanzetti\\_finding\\_aid.pdf](http://www.bpl.org/research/rb/sacco_and_vanzetti_finding_aid.pdf)
35. Guadagni's correspondence appear in at least two archives in relation to the Sacco and Vanzetti case, the Boston Public Library Rare Books and Manuscripts Department's Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee Collection and in the Anthony (Nino) Capraro, Papers, at the University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center. The letter on file in Boston was written in December of 1920, accompanies a Carlo Tresca letter, and attempts to refute the guilty verdict by arguing for political discrimination. The letters in the Capraro Papers, written in 1924 and 1925, shows a similar set of connections. Capraro, an Italian socialist and labor organizer, was friends with Carlo Tresca and Arturo Giovanitti, all of whom were involved in the Sacco and Vanzetti Defense Committee. Paul Avrich argues that Guadagni was indeed an associate of Sacco's and that the Galleanisti in the Lynn/Boston area, including Schiavina, were part of the group of anarchists actively bombing government offices after WWI, in response to the Palmer Raids. This also included Mario Buda, the man Avrich believed was behind the Bombing of Wall Street in 1920. See Avrich 1991.
36. Robert D'Attilio has commented that: "the massive forces of the United States government were very specifically directed against this journal and its supporters. Time and time again its offices were raided, its issues confiscated and refused the mails, its editors arrested. As a result of these raids, contrary to later public statements of federal officials, other material identifying Sacco and Vanzetti as more than ordinary subscribers found its way into Department of Justice files. These files contained a postcard... it said, "In whatever concerns *Cronaca Sovversiva* I am with you. Yours for the revolution." See D'Attilio, "*La Salute é in Voi: the Anarchist Dimension*,"
37. Guadagni's association with IWW publications would indicate that he would typically be associated with the anarcho-syndicalist or organizationalist wing of the *sovversivi*, as opposed to the anti-organizationalist side often associated with Galleani.
38. Botinelli is also listed as the publisher of *Il Corriere del Vermont* in 1908.
39. Robert D'Attilio, comments, "In Barre, Galleani published the *Cronaca* in the printing house of C.S. Bottinelli, whose business is listed on the 1905 Barre Street directory." Robert D'Attilio, email message to author, July 5, 2009.
40. See Appendix, Diagram 2: *La Responsabilita' e la Solidarieta' nella Lotta Operaia's* Network
41. Also, both pamphlets address rather broad audiences. The Lynn pamphlet is essentially an anti-war tract aimed at raising awareness about the Italian nation's invasion of Libya and about activists in Italy fighting against the push

to become a colonial power. It also seeks to bring attention to the plight of Masetti, turning him into a living martyr and a hero for an international cause. The Barre Pamphlet is broadly addressed to the whole working class, and is the product of one of the most famous nodes in the anarchist network, namely Max Nettlau's Freedom Group in Switzerland. Thus, both link the reader and the printers with anarchists in Europe, uniting struggles through shared theoretical discourse and sympathy for radical direct action.

42. See Appendix, Diagram 3: Network of the Two Pamphlets.
43. In 1919, Galleani was officially deported back to Italy by the U.S. Department of Labor.
44. Gage, p. 207.
45. Nunzio Pernicone, "War Among the American Anarchists: the Galleanisti's Campaign Against Carlo Tresca," in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, ed. Philip Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer (West Port, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), p. 78.
46. D'Attilio confirms that Bottinelli was the printer of *La Cronaca Sovversiva* while it was located in Barre, a fact that may help to explain the continuity in type-face between the pamphlet printed by *Casa Editrice L'Azione* in Barre and the pamphlet *Madri d'Italia!* printed by Galleani in Lynn. Robert D'Attilio, email message to author, July 5, 2009.
47. This first appearance of the Haymarket masthead is followed in November of 1907 with a special edition which contains a large quantity of Abate's art. This includes one page with the portraits of Filippo Turati, Augusto Babel, E. Vandervelde, Enrico Ferri and Pablo Iglesias.
48. This is also clearly seen in the use of Abate's portrait of Masetti on the cover of *Madri d'Italia!*.
49. Some of the standard sections that featured drawings by Abate included "*Per la Vita e Per l'idea*" (For life and the Idea), "*Note Sovversiva del Due Emisferi*" (Subversive notes from two hemisphere), "*Note Di Propaganda*" (Propaganda Notes) and "*Tra Libri Riviste e Girognli*" (Review of Books, Journals and Magazines) with a woman sitting at a desk in front of a book shelf which features information on new newly released publications.
50. Orators included Luigi Galleani, Hippolyte Havel, Morrison J. Swift and Thomas Eyges. *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, October 4, 1913.
51. Surprisingly both anarchists (known to oppose electoral participation) spoke to encourage workers to vote against a law that threatened to restrict the sale of alcohol to licensed establishments; a move that would hurt the home-sale of wine which helped support working-class families. *La Cronaca Sovversiva* covered the dual address at the Opera House. See Robin Hazard Ray, *No License to Serve: Prohibition, Anarchists, and the Italian-American Widows of Barre, Vermont, 1900–1920*. Accessed May 4, 2011.  
[http://www.italianamericana.com/Italian\\_American\\_AMERICAN\\_WOMAN\\_ITALIAN\\_STYLE/Italian\\_American\\_Women\\_in\\_Vermont.html](http://www.italianamericana.com/Italian_American_AMERICAN_WOMAN_ITALIAN_STYLE/Italian_American_Women_in_Vermont.html)
52. "Deve trovar cordiale fin da ora il benvenuto del sovversivi, l'incoraggiamento e l'appoggio dei lavoratori intelligenti I quali sappiano

*guardare, di là delle meschine frontiere del dogma e della congrega, tutte le manifestazioni del pensiero sovversivo e dell' azione rivoluzionaria, e giungano attraverso questo paziente avoro di studio o di riflessione a farsi anche del più ardui e del più complessi problemi sociali un concetto proprio, limpido e sicuro, quale si richiederebbe indorano ai mille scaguoizzi che per non leggere che la loro bibbia ed' il loro giornale, per non muoversi se non quando e secondo comandano le eminenze od I concili, sono del movimento 'il peso morto, la zavorra che anchilosa tutto le agitazioni quando non le precipita all' abdicazione ed al fallimento.... E la simpatia troverà tanto più pro fonda e diffusa che, in luogo d'essere orgauo autorizzato e consacrato di fazione o di partito, l'Azione vuol essere organo della classe proletaria, libera pale tra a tutti gli studiosi di parte sovversiva." La Cronaca Sovversiva, July 13, 1913.*

53. *Il circolo autonomo costituitosi a meriden tra giovani ansiosi di concorrere all propaganda delle idee ilbertarie chiede ai giornali sovversivi italiani degli Stati Uniti l'invio settimanale di cinque copie, impegnandosi a pagarle regolarmente ed ogni fine di mese.*
54. Galleani and Abate's connections to the *Circolo di Studi Sociali di Barre* are established by an article entitled "The Anarchists of Barre, Vermont," in the March 14th, 1905, edition of the *Sunday Herald-Boston*. This article discusses a building located on Blackwell Street in Barre, known as the "*Circolo Studi Sociali*." Described as an "Anarchist headquarters," the article claims the building housed a gathering space, a printing press, a library, and drawing classes. Carlo Abate is actually interviewed in the article, in reference to the propaganda projects of the Barre anarchists. We can intuit that the paper referred to was *La Cronaca Sovversiva* and the drawing classes mentioned were Abate's art school. This puts Galleani and Abate's two major life projects in the same building as the *Circolo di Studi Sociali di Barre* and greatly increasing the likely strength of their interpersonal bonds.
55. The advertisement describes *Il Portafoglio* as "an excellent work for reading and for acting," and comes "strongly recommend to all comrades desiring to intensify elementary propaganda among the workers." "*Il portafoglio: Drama in un atto di ottavio mirdeau. Questo Lavoro ottimo per la lettura e per la recitazione, lo raccomandiamo caldamente a tutti I compagni desiderosi di intensificare la propaganda elementare fra i lavoratori.*"
56. This Bulletin is advertised as an "*interessantissimo opuscolo di oltre 60 pagine*" (very interesting brochure of more than 60 pages) containing articles such as "*Constataando un Fenomeno*" (Noting a Phenomenon) by R. Elia; "*Gli Anarchici Nel Momento Attuale*," (The Anarchists at the Present Moment) by G. Guzzardi; "*Arrestiamoci sulla China*," (*Pausing on China*) by G. Solaria; and a space for correspondence called "*Parole al Vento*" (Words in the Wind).
57. For example, on September 13, 1913, there is an advertisement for the East Boston Autonomous Group's re-print of Pietro Kropotkin's *La Morale Anarchia* and on September 20th, the East Boston Autonomous Group advertised a pamphlet of writing by French anarchist Jean Grave.

58. The November 15th edition of *La Cronaca Sovversiva* ran an advertisement for the East Boston Autonomous Group's "*Paco di Propaganda*" (Propaganda Pack) which contained 50 copies of "*L'Attentato di Matteo Moral*" ("The Attempt of Matteo Moral") and 50 copies of "*La Peste Religiosa*" ("The Religious Plague") for \$1.25. This new form of distribution hints at the increasing scale of the work being done by these propagandists as they move from mailing individual pamphlets to large bundles of texts. The "*Paco di Propaganda*" remains on sale in the November 22nd edition of the paper and, on November 29th, there is advertisement for the East Boston Autonomous Group's printing of Luigi Galleani's famous bomb-making manual, *La Salute è in Voi! (Health is in You!)*. Finally, on December 20th, Pietro Kropotkin's tract "*La scienza Moderna e l'Anarchismo*" is offered for 40 cents by the East Boston Autonomous Group.
59. Throughout 1913 the projects of both groups seem intertwined, and the different collectives clearly support each other. This ranges from the East Boston Autonomous Group printing Galleani's tracts to Galleani listing their whole catalog alongside the propaganda he is attempting to sell.
60. For example, on May 3, 1913, *La Cronaca Sovversiva* announced that the East Boston Autonomous Group was selling Galleani's new book, *Faccia a Faccia col Nemico (Face to Face with the Enemy)*.
61. Importantly, the back of *Madri d'Italia!* includes an advertisement for *La Cronaca Sovversiva* which notes that all subscriptions should sent "*indirizzare esclusivamente alla Cronaca Sovversiva*" (directed exclusively to *La Cronaca Sovversiva*) "P.O. Box 678 Lynn, Mass." This suggests that distribution of the actual newspaper remained tied to Galleani's location in Lynn even though other publications were distributed out of a P.O. Box 53 in East Boston.
62. This issue also shows a continued effort to raise funds to send the famous Italian anarchist Malatesta back in Italy, for a propaganda tour, and an increase in articles against the military, with a focus on Italy.
63. Several small articles on Masetti appear on September 20th and November 1st. By December 13th there is another large front page article on Masetti.
64. The December 20th edition also runs the first advertisements for "*Madri d'Italia!*" calling the pamphlet an "*Elegante Opuscolo con ritratto, edito dal Gruppo Autonomo*" (Elegant Brochure with portrait, edited by the Autonomous Group).
65. Curiously, the advertisements for the *Madri d'Italia!* pamphlet in *La Cronaca Sovversiva* is ordered from and edited by the East Boston Autonomous Group. However, the edition of the pamphlet I examined was edited by the Plainville anarchists, this might mean that there were different editions of the pamphlet, sponsored by different collectives, printed at the same time. This advertisement appears in *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, December 20, 1913.
66. See Appendix, Diagram 4: *La Cronaca Sovversiva* Network.
67. For example, names listed in 1913, as donors to *La Cronaca Sovversiva* from Plainville, PA, included D. Ortolani, A. Cergna, N. Mariani, G. Ugolini, B. Danucci, V. Lupini, T. Vergari, A. Danutti, G. Papa, C. Filippini, N. Orsini, T.

Mazzatorta, A. Minelli, P. Troiani, T. Amedeo, A. Supini, C. Marcello, M. Toni, B. Oreste, F. Guidobaldi, Chiodini M., A. Mezzo, U. Vergari, Bianchi, B. Ghilardi, E. Berboni, R. Minelli, U. Vergarsi, and T. Mascioli.

68. See Appendix, Diagram 5: The Combined Networks.
69. Robert D'Attilio sums up this persecution well when he writes: "From 1914 until its final clandestine issues in 1919, the political suppression by legal or illegal means of Cronaca Sovversiva was the unrelenting goal of the authorities; during this period the authorities and Cronaca Sovversiva were pitted against each other in a bitter social struggle that was just short of open warfare; the government's acts of repression, often illegal - surveillance, raids, arrests, and deportations, the use of agents provocateurs, the refusal of the mails, perhaps murder-were met in turn by the anarchists' attempts to incite social revolution by their militancy in strikes, protest meetings, anti-war activities, by sabotage, and retaliatory violence; Sacco and Vanzetti were militant supporters of Cronaca Sovversiva, and participants in these struggles; and this information was in the files of the authorities long before their arrest. If these points are acknowledged, and I think they must be, they carry far reaching implications for the Sacco- Vanzetti Case; they indicate that the primary target of the authorities was the anarchist group that Sacco and Vanzetti were part of, not the two men as individuals; they indicate that the authorities tried to use the Sacco- Vanzetti case as an instrument to finish off the remnants of this group that had been centered about Cronaca Sovversiva." Robert D'Attilio. "*La Salute é in Voi: the Anarchist Dimension*," accessed May 4, 2011, [http://recollectionbooks.com/bleed/ Encyclopedia/Sacco Vanzetti/essayrd.html](http://recollectionbooks.com/bleed/Encyclopedia/SaccoVanzetti/essayrd.html)

# CHAPTER SIX

## ANARCHIST CULTURE ON THE CUSP OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

DANA WARD

*“The whole literary generation of which I was a part was impregnated with anarchist thought.”*

—Leon Blum

Always adopting a skeptical stance toward political paths to change, anarchists politicized every other aspect of social life. Economics, education, sex, diet, publishing, music, architecture, the arts, and much else were subjected not simply to intellectual critique, but also faced concrete challenges posed by the developing anarchist aesthetic to the reigning orthodoxy in each field. Anarchists saw themselves as culture builders creating alternative spaces for free expression, autonomy, and horizontal social relations. The arts, broadly understood, provided both medium and message for the anarchist vision to proliferate. Both the form of artistic communication as well as its content were seen as ways to challenge hierarchical, inequalitarian institutions and to socialize a new generation into a set of values that promised to upend the established authorities and bring “high” culture down to the earth inhabited by ordinary workers. By the cusp of the twentieth century anarchists had developed a rich participatory culture that permeated the everyday lives of the movement’s participants. This chapter seeks to describe the evolution of this anarchist aesthetic during the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. Attention will be paid to the spaces and the content of the culture anarchists created in those spaces.<sup>1</sup>

Anarchists avidly engaged in producing a “counterculture” long before the term gained currency. The motivating idea was to create a new society from within the shell of the old by creating institutions and social networks based on free association and nonhierarchical relations. The emerging new society would either come to the fore after the revolution,

providing the seed from which the new society would blossom, or, gradually, the new autonomous institutions based on free association would push the old social relations to the periphery. Many of the major early anarchist theorists were among those drawn to building concrete alternatives that challenged contemporary society, including Josiah Warren establishing the Cincinnati Time Store, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's efforts to create a People's Bank, the Reclus brothers' participation in producer cooperatives, the Chicago anarchists' choirs, the French anarchists who animated the *Theatre de l'Oeuvre*, Francisco Ferrer's Modern School with its many replications in Europe and the United States, or Barcelona's *ateneos*, anarchist cultural centers that were crucial to consolidating working-class culture and laid the foundation for the anarchist revolution during the Spanish Civil War. While labor agitation may have been at the forefront of anarchist activism, wherever anarchists congregated in sufficient numbers to constitute an ensemble and an audience, some form of cultural expression ensued including poetry readings, theater productions, dances, choirs, art exhibitions, parades, and, of course, the infamous picnics which might include any and all of these activities. The beer halls and cafes that became magnets for anarchists soon expanded to include lecture halls and stages, thereby creating a space for the practice of anarchy.<sup>2</sup> Thus, along with consuming copious amounts of beer and coffee one could simultaneously absorb an education that included not just social and economic doctrines, but all the creative arts as well.

Given the grave hostility directed toward anarchists by established states, an anarchist diaspora soon emerged that spread the ideology around the world. Not only did these exiles sprinkle their new host countries with anarchist ideas, but upon their return to their home countries, the former exiles injected their native anarchist movements with fresh perspectives garnered during their years in the anarchist diaspora. The collectivist anarchist movement in the United States, for example, benefited greatly from the anti-anarchist laws passed in Germany, France, Spain and elsewhere in that a critical mass of radical workers and movement leaders found their way to America, where by the 1880s, in Chicago alone, there were tens of thousands of anarchists supported by dozens of halls and newspapers.<sup>3</sup> Durruti, for example, learned much during exile that he would apply upon his return to Spain on the eve of the Civil War, including guerilla warfare as practiced by Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine. Anarchism, in short, was a transnational movement. Movements back and forth between Italy and the U.S., among France, Belgium, and England, between Spain and Latin America, and, of course, between Switzerland and everywhere else, provided a constant stream of cross-cultural contact that resulted in an anar-

chist culture with a surprisingly common core that went well beyond opposition to State and Capital.

The anarchist aesthetic that developed rested most comfortably on the twin pillars of nature and individuality, and both were under assault by the bourgeois society the anarchists stood against. Anarchist artists and intellectuals naturally sought to improve the lives of the working class through the arts and literature, but more importantly, they sought to change the very practice of art and literature itself by breaking through the religious traditions and received styles in each field. Anarchist painters found new ways to apply paint, anarchist writers took new subjects and organized their narratives in new ways, playwrights focused on new subjects and found new textures to add to drama, and, eventually, even in music, theme and harmony were attacked by silence and discord. In short, it wasn't just the product of art that changed; the very process of its production was torn asunder and reassembled. The emergent aesthetic emphasized nature, natural form, individual creativity, social solidarity and, often, the undermining of tradition.

## Spaces

Since traditional party politics were anathema to anarchists, if the Ideal were to spread, it would need free spaces for nurturing. Although journals, newspapers, and books were a major focus of anarchist activity, creating a space for the practice of anarchy was necessary for the successful spread of the anarchists' new ethic celebrating individual creativity and social responsibility. While reading anarchist tracts might produce adherence to the Ideal, a far more powerful impact could be produced by immersing oneself in a web of horizontal social relations. The actual practice involved in creating a choir, organizing a lecture, publishing a journal, producing flyers, or teaching workers and children to read, allowed anarchists to see themselves in the movement,<sup>4</sup> to experience solidarity, and to gain the satisfaction of seeing ideas put into action. In the process, anarchist identities solidified.

States fully recognized that blunting anarchism's impact on society required the restriction of anarchist space. Indeed, much of the history of anarchist/state relations is the history of states' efforts to eliminate public spaces where isolated individuals could discover like-minded associates and form a nucleus of resistance. Throughout much of the middle of the nineteenth century, for example, it was illegal for more than three people to congregate on the streets of France. By the end of the century, in many countries it was simply illegal to be an anarchist. For instance, no attempt

whatsoever was made to link the anarchists to the Haymarket bombing for which they were tried in Chicago in 1886. Likewise, in France during the Trial of the Thirty in 1894, most of the defendants were guilty of breaking no law other than being anarchist and associating with other anarchists. While the anarchist writers and their press were primary targets of state repression, equal efforts were expended pressuring landlords to restrict anarchist access to meeting spaces and living accommodations. Likewise, known anarchists were placed on employers' black lists, and many cities transformed public spaces by building armories<sup>5</sup> for the troops routinely sent out to suppress strikes and labor protests, or engaged in wholesale urban removal plans to make building barricades during civil unrest more difficult. Entire neighborhoods in Paris<sup>6</sup> and Barcelona,<sup>7</sup> for example, were razed, streets widened, and workers removed to the periphery of the city in efforts to restrict the space available for anarchist activity. In short, the history of anarchist/state relations is very much a history of the expansion and contraction of anarchist spaces. This struggle continues into the present where police in New York City fabricated evidence hoping to convict anarchists of engaging in dangerous activities such as riding bicycles together on public streets,<sup>8</sup> or throughout the United States where authorities prevent members of Food Not Bombs from distributing free food to the hungry homeless in public places.<sup>9</sup>

The importance of anarchist space to the success of the movement can be seen in the oft-told anecdote of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman's first encounter.<sup>10</sup> Goldman, after being profoundly moved by the injustice perpetrated upon the Haymarket martyrs, decided to devote herself to the cause for which the martyrs died. Uprooting herself from Rochester during the summer of 1889, she arrived in New York City bearing nothing more than a sewing machine, a small handbag filled with clothes, and three addresses: one for her aunt, one for an anarchist student she met while working in a corset factory in New Haven, and one for the office of Johann Most's *Freiheit*.<sup>11</sup>

On her first day she located her acquaintance, A. Solotaroff, who took her to dinner at Sachs's café on Suffolk Street, the "headquarters" of the East Side radicals, socialists, and anarchists. After Solotaroff introduced her to two young anarchist workers, Anna and Helen Minkin, who immediately offered to share their apartment with her, Emma heard Berkman shout out an order for an extra-large steak and an extra cup of coffee. By the end of the evening, the two were seated side by side listening to a lecture by Johann Most.<sup>12</sup> Thus began the lifelong relationship between the United States' two most famous anarchists. On her first day, through a single acquaintance, Emma found a place to live, connected with a com-

munity of activists, began one of the most fruitful relationships in the history of anarchism, and listened to a lecture by the leading anarchist of the immigrant community in the United States. Not a bad start for a young immigrant woman intent upon joining the anarchist movement.

Sachs's was just one of dozens of anarchist cafés and beer halls across the New York metropolitan area.<sup>13</sup> Sachs's attracted Russian and Yiddish anarchists, while other establishments catered to the various other ethnicities huddled together in New York City. In Spain, a similar process was underway such that by the 1920s and 1930s, ideological enemies knew exactly which café to bomb or strafe and be assured of hitting opponents. These social institutions provided the space for the creation of countless networks among the patrons. These networks, in turn, produced other spaces for the creation of still broader networks. For example, many years after Goldman and Berkman met, they were crucial participants in creating the Ferrer Day School for Children.<sup>14</sup> The Modern School movement, in turn, drew participants from beyond the anarchist activist community, engaging prominent scholars and artists who otherwise might not have come into contact with the anarchist movement. In city after city, in country after country, similar spaces were being created, perhaps nowhere more successfully than in Paris in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> There, artists, writers, poets, critics, agitators, and workers created a rich anarchist culture, much of which eventually seeped to the core of modernism.<sup>16</sup>

## Networks

The two key French anarchists connecting artists and anarchists during the last two decades of the nineteenth century were Jean Grave<sup>17</sup> and Félix Fénéon.<sup>18</sup> Grave edited *Le Révolté*, *La Révolte*, *Les Temps Nouveaux* and produced numerous books, plays, and articles. Félix Fénéon was perhaps even more influential beyond the anarchist movement than Grave. He was without question the most important art critic in the 1890s. He was a prime mover in bringing Seurat to the attention of the public, was an agent for Matisse, invented the term "neoimpressionism," edited *Revue Blanche* (the leading literary journal), perfected the "novel in three lines" genre (first in *Le Figaro*, then, starting in 1906, for *Le Matin*), and may well have bombed a Parisian café in 1894. Both Grave and Fénéon were among those charged in the Trial of the Thirty, and both were broadly connected throughout the Paris intellectual community in *fin de siècle* France. Together their networks of friends and colleagues illustrate the importance of social networks for the proliferation of anarchist culture.

While Grave corresponded with a broad array of anarchists, his correspondence with artists and writers was perhaps even wider.<sup>19</sup> Constantly looking for articles and illustrations for his journal or for the many other contemporary anarchist journals with which he was in contact, Grave became a central node connecting anarchists with artists in the avant garde network. Fénéon would become an equally important node making the reverse connections between artists and anarchists. Grave and Fénéon maintained good relations but moved in slightly different circles, as Fénéon's preference for working with Zo d'Axa, editor of the anarchist journal *L'Endehors*, illustrates. However, both Grave and Fénéon were very much engaged with the avant garde beyond anarchist circles.

Grave had risen to a position of leadership in the anarchist community primarily as a result of his journalistic work, but well before he became a leading anarchist writer he was an activist. Grave came from humble roots. Both he and his father were cobblers and lived through the Paris Commune, which became a defining event for Grave's politics. After being drafted into the military in 1875, Grave's activism began in 1879 when he became involved with the *Parti des Travailleurs Socialistes de France*, an ideologically diverse workers' party with a significant anarchist presence. Grave allied himself with the anarchists and on the practical front helped raise funds to aid amnestied Communards.<sup>20</sup> In 1880, Grave helped found the first significant anarchist group in Paris since the suppression of the Commune, The Social Study Group of the Fifth and Thirteenth Wards of Paris. At its meetings, Grave came into contact with the Italian anarchist exiles Malatesta and Caffero, and with Jules Guesde, leader of the *Parti des Travailleurs Socialistes de France*. Here Grave began building his considerable network of political contacts. Soon Grave came into conflict with Guesde after the latter's conversion to Marxism and his advocacy of electoral paths to change. In the summer of 1880 Grave represented the Study Group at a Regional Congress of the Centre where he spoke out against Guesde's political strategy. In his speech, Grave suggested funds would be better spent on dynamite than on political campaigns and argued that voting was counter-revolutionary. The speech attracted considerable press coverage, propelling Grave into the leadership of French anarchists.<sup>21</sup>

Grave had met both Kropotkin and Reclus by 1881 and developed good relations with both. After Kropotkin was expelled from Switzerland and convicted in the Lyon trial of 1883 for belonging to a defunct organization, *Le Révolté*, the journal started by Kropotkin and funded by Reclus, needed a new editor. Elisée Reclus, who had become quite friendly with Grave, recommended Grave for the editorship and, after some hesitation,

Grave accepted and moved to Geneva in 1883. Due to difficulties in getting the journal into France as well as Swiss police harassment, in 1885 Grave moved back to France with the journal, which in 1887 became *La Révolte*, and after 1895, *Les Temps Nouveaux*.<sup>22</sup>

In 1887, Grave created a four page literary supplement to *La Révolte* designed to facilitate workers' education. "Not only would the masses be informed of the events taking place in the world, but they would be awakened to the various forms and themes of literature seen from the anarchist perspective."<sup>23</sup> Grave reprinted excerpts from classic thinkers such as Diderot, Rabelais, Montaigne, Voltaire, Baudelaire, Hugo, Swift, and Balzac, and also gave voice to the most advanced contemporary thinkers such as Adalbert, Adam, Lazare, Retteé, Scholl, Richopin, and many more.<sup>24</sup> *La Révolte* and its literary supplement became the propaganda arm of the French anarchist movement, and had the goal of inspiring the masses to revolt, eliminating all forms of government, creating a society based on horizontal relations, and lifting the yoke of tradition from the backs of the masses. Grave's work producing this journal created a network that brought together artists, writers, and labor agitators who came to define a distinctly modern cultural perspective.

In Fénéon's case, his initial introduction to the cultural elite came through the War Office where he had won a civil-service position. There Fénéon met two young poets, Louis Denise and Zenon Fiere, and a middle-aged critic, Jules Christophe, who introduced Fénéon to Zola, Verlaine, Fabre des Essarts, and others in the Paris cultural scene. By then, Fénéon was already an anarchist. Seven years younger than Grave, Fénéon had been only ten years old during the Commune and lived far removed in Burgundy (later the family moved to Lugny outside Lyon), but that did not mean he was unaffected by the Commune and its aftermath, which he followed closely in the press.<sup>25</sup> France's educational system provided the finishing touches to Fénéon's anarchism. As a youth Fénéon attended parochial schools, but when Fénéon was fifteen, an uncle financed Fénéon's attendance at the exclusive *Benedictine Ecole Normale Spéciale* at Cluny. After two years, financial strains forced Fénéon to complete his schooling at a public *lycée*, but the bulk of Fénéon's education was in religious schools. Fénéon was an outstanding student, excelling in multiple subjects, winning many awards, and placing first in history and geography.<sup>26</sup> Fénéon's later reflections on this period in his life make it clear that his radicalism was fueled by his experience at school. In 1884, in one of his earliest writings, Fénéon railed against the effect of religion on students:

...dogma will have made him dull-witted; his thinking will always just stagger along; used to giving in to the absurd authority of an imaginary

deity, he will no longer have any conception of the majesty of man; the feeling of liberty will have been obliterated in him; he will be ripe for all kinds of subservience.<sup>27</sup>

It was not simply religious doctrine that Fénéon found oppressive. His *lycée*, like virtually all in France, was run like a prison employing panopticon principles. Conformity, subservience, discipline, and order were drilled into students, all of whom were subject to compulsory military service upon graduation, where they received a second dose of coerced conformity. By the time Fénéon arrived in Paris in 1881, after suffering through parochial education and military service, he was already committed to the anarchist cause.

Fénéon sat for a civil-service exam while still in the military and passed with the highest marks. This assured him a secure income and upon completion of military service, Fénéon arrived in Paris in March 1881 and took up his position in the War Office. By 1883, Fénéon was contributing to anarchist journals, publishing articles over the next twelve years in more than twenty publications, (most of them symbolist, but many in anarchist journals as well issued anonymously or under a pseudonym).<sup>28</sup> Fénéon's first literary effort involved founding *Libre Revue*, literally in a noisy cabaret in Montmartre. Fénéon recruited contributors from among the patrons, producing an "attractive" review reflecting Beaux-Arts tastes. Fénéon's early book reviews and art criticism appeared in *Libre Revue* and from 1884 to 1885 in *Revue Indépendante*, which Fénéon edited and which included political and philosophical articles as well as art and literature reviews. His early work in these two journals established Fénéon's credentials in the art world, but more importantly established a network of friends that allowed him to become a major conduit connecting art and anarchy. By 1886, he became close friends with Marllarmé and Verlaine and, having covered the first *Salon des Artistes Indépendants*, he also came to know Signac and Seurat well, becoming a lifelong champion of their work. From this point on Fénéon became involved in a wide variety of groups in both the art and anarchy worlds. For example, every Monday night he could be found at Café Voltaire discussing art and politics, listening to poetry readings or debating literature with between 30 and 50 people who regarded Fénéon as "the most entertaining" of all.<sup>29</sup> At Brasserie Gambriuns, in the Latin Quarter—where Jules Christophe claims "symbolism was born"—Fénéon could often be found conversing with the writers attracted to its quieter surroundings. At one of its tables, over a three-night period, Fénéon, Moréas, Paul Adam and Oscar Méténier produced a highly regarded book of criticism. In short, café society created a space for the development of anarchist thought and a network for its diffusion just as

fecund as the British Library's Reading Room was for Marx. Ancillary to the public gatherings were innumerable private soirees in residences where members of the art and anarchy network often met. For example, in 1886, Fénéon began regular Sunday get-togethers with artists and writers either in homes or cafés where one frequently found Camille Pissarro, Signac, and Seurat seated with Grave and/or Fénéon, often accompanied by foreign visitors and exiles.

## The Anarchist Aesthetic

"Anarchism succeeded culturally where it failed politically."

—David Weir

In the four decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, anarchist ideas seeped into the broader culture, animated the arts to their core, particularly in France, and congealed into a broad set of social practices with a surprising cross-cultural continuity. During this period in France, Kropotkin's ideas<sup>30</sup> provided the foundation of French anarchism.<sup>31</sup> He was by far the best-known anarchist of his day, wrote most of his early anarchist works in French, and spent three years in French prisons. Furthermore, Kropotkin's life work was very much an elaboration and fleshing out of his mentor's ideas, France's greatest late nineteenth century geographer, Elisée Reclus.<sup>32</sup> Grave, in many ways, was Kropotkin's publicist in France, earning him the nickname "the anarchist Pope."

Kropotkin's view of art was more pedestrian than one might expect from a writer with such a strong philosophical bent, but he did expand upon Proudhon's idea that art should document the lived condition of workers who otherwise would remain invisible to the bourgeoisie. Kropotkin went beyond Proudhon by arguing that the artist should not simply render reality accurately, but should spark the conscience of humanity and thus create change. Still, Kropotkin took a practical position *vis à vis* art, arguing that the artist should serve the revolution. In *Words of a Rebel*, a collection of Kropotkin's writing from *Le Révolté* and *La Révolte*, Kropotkin called upon artists to "narrate for us in your vivid style or in your fervent pictures the titanic struggle of the masses against their oppressors; inflame young hearts with the beautiful breath of revolution... Show the people the ugliness of contemporary life... tell us what a rational life might be if it did not have to stumble at every step because of the ineptitude and the ignominies of the present social order."<sup>33</sup>

Grave accepted this position, but broadened it by arguing that art itself can be a revolutionary force. "Over and over again Grave insisted that in

the future society the artist would be left in perfect freedom to express his concept of the beautiful, and declared his accord with Oscar Wilde that ‘art is the supreme manifestation of individualism.’”<sup>34</sup> Grave appreciated Kropotkin’s view of art as well as the “art for art’s sake” position, although in practice he easily lost patience with art that served no social purpose. Still, Grave recognized that art, regardless of content, can serve revolutionary purposes by undermining received methods and subjects, but also by presenting an ideal that all might share after the revolution: “It is true that Grave, like Kropotkin, had a preference for art with a social message... but he was nonetheless happy to accept the art of the Neo-Impressionists, for their honest portrayal of the life of the humble could serve the cause by exposing the injustices and inequalities of the existing social order. At the same time, their artistic merits could educate the workers and prepare them for the richer existence promised by an anarchist future.”<sup>35</sup> Grave and his associates...

...emphasized that art could aid the social transformation by showing the misery of the present, the possibility of change, and the ideal of a future society of free individuals. They strongly denied, however, that anarchism admitted only an art of direct propaganda; they recognized the value of works devoted to an ideal of pure beauty without reference to the contemporary milieu.

In sum, “where Proudhon urged the realist artist to observe society and Kropotkin charged the revolutionist with changing it, Grave imagined his utopian artist as the embodiment of society itself.”<sup>36</sup>

Grave’s expansive view of art helps explain why artists found a comfortable home in anarchist journals. Anarchists were well aware that a new consciousness of social injustice had settled into artistic culture and consequently opened the pages of their journals to art. Artists, for their part, appreciated the anarchists’ receptivity and offered their works for inclusion in their journals, joined the list of subscribers, provided public support for arrested anarchists, and often opened their wallets to finance publishing efforts. Among the list of subscribers to *La Révolte*, police may have been surprised to find the titans of contemporary French culture: Alphonse Daudet, Anatole France, J.K. Huysmans, Leconte de Lisle, Mallarmé, Ménerd, Loti, Antione, Lugné-Poe, Gourmont, Maximilien Luce, Signac, Rosny, Richepin, Mirbeau, Hérold, Quillard and, of course, Pissarro.<sup>37</sup> While other anarchist journals may not have had as wide an artistic constituency, art was integral to most. For example, Pouget’s *Père Peinard*, as well as *Le Libertaire*, made explicit calls for an alliance between art and revolution, and journals such as *La Sociale*, *L’Endehors*, *La Revue Anar-*

*chiste*, and others opened their pages to discussion of art and work by artists. Late in 1891 a group of writer-militants established the short-lived journal *L'Art Social*. This group leaned more toward art as propaganda than toward art for art's sake, producing pedestrian works that had little impact on the art scene. However, a few years after the journal's demise, the same group resurrected the journal, taking the further step of organizing a program to bring art to the masses which succeeded in organizing lectures, discussion groups, and exhibitions in working-class neighborhoods across Paris, long after their journal collapsed. "With the dual purpose of artistic and social education, the group projected free art exhibitions and theatrical presentations. A contemporary writer described its meetings as 'long philosophical, literary, and scientific discussions. It was in a sense the Academy of anarchism...'"<sup>38</sup> Pelloutier, the leading French anarcho-syndicalist, was part of the *Groupe de L'Art Social*, as were Charles Albert and Paul Delesalle, who were both close associates of Grave. Pelloutier saw the role of art as the destroyer of establishment myths and an exemplar of revolt. He hoped art would lead to social revolution by increasing awareness of injustice and providing examples of resistance to prejudice and authority.

The "Academy of Anarchism" was one of many such organizations that formed a network of anarchists, artists, and workers. In Belgium, the *Section d'Art* performed the same function of bringing art to the masses, art which the Belgian Jules Destrée hoped would produce an intellectual and spiritual revolution of equal importance to the coming material revolution. The French anarchists enviously tried to emulate the Belgian experiment in yet another example of international cross-fertilization. Grave used his considerable influence to recruit artists willing to take up social themes in their art in order to reveal the human condition, stoke the spirit of revolt, or provide a vision of the anarchist future.<sup>39</sup> Pissarro's work, of course, fulfilled the latter function.<sup>40</sup>

Similar groups emerged on the theater front, founding a number of stages from which plays with revolutionary themes designed to appeal to the working class could be presented, including *Théâtre Libre* in 1887 (which emphasized realism and naturalism), the *Théâtre de l'Art Social* in 1893 (which proposed to bring revolutionary messages to the masses), a theater group that emerged from the Paris *Maison du Peuple* in the mid-1890's (which was designed to bring dramas to the working class neighborhoods), and the *Théâtre Civique* in 1897 (which also sought to bring inspiring drama to the working class).<sup>41</sup>

In the oppressive atmosphere of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, artists of all sorts began to see themselves as victimized as much

by society as workers were victimized by capitalists. The artist “began to identify himself with the working class, as both victims of the same sort of injustice.”<sup>42</sup> This identification led to major contributions to the anarchist press by artists, poets, and novelists. Among the neoimpressionist artists, there was great ideological unanimity. Pissarro, Signac, Luce, Angrand, Cross, and Van Rysselberghe, for example, all contributed work to *Les Temps Nouveaux*, almost all were personally acquainted with Grave, and Pissarro and Signac were constantly contributing money to the anarchist press as well.<sup>43</sup> The worlds of anarchy and art merged in the late nineteenth century because both sought the destruction of old forms that would create the conditions for the emergence of full human potential.

Neither anarchists nor the avant-garde artists and intellectuals were willing to conform to established traditions and institutions. Their shared nonconformity, their shared desire to escape objectification by State and Capital, their lust for individual agency and uniqueness, their rejection of bourgeois social myths, a shared sense of victimization, and their burning awareness of social injustice brought artists and anarchists into a shared project based on a common aesthetic. This is not to say there were no conflicts. There were strains between individualists and communalists among the anarchists and between those who advocated art for art’s sake versus those who would put art in service of revolution. But these fissures were minor compared to their common values.

First among those values was self-sovereignty. Removal of coercion in all its forms had to be the foundation of the new society. Only by eliminating material differences would the uniqueness of each individual be allowed to emerge. The purpose of material equality was not to impose conformity, but rather to allow for individuality. The radical poet A.F. Hérold summarized the emerging perspective well:

The social compact to which we basically owe our sympathy must have as its only aims to assure men the means of living and to prevent one individual from usurping a material power which allows him to exploit or oppress another individual to his profit. For no one has the right to order anything of others, and each has the right to live, to think, to speak, to love as he understands it. Economic communism, joined to political, intellectual, and moral anarchism, seems to me the only way of assuring the free development of the personality, and consequently, I believe that it is to this that the artist’s preference should go.<sup>44</sup>

Thinking and living according to one’s preferences and understanding often involved a closer relationship to nature. For example, nudism became a fairly widespread practice among anarchists. Reclus spent at least an hour

each day *au naturelle*. He also advocated vegetarianism,<sup>45</sup> a preference which is common among anarchists to this day. With the smashing of the state and the elimination of physical borders, linguistic borders would also need demolishing and consequently anarchists welcomed the creation of Esperanto in 1887. Most anarchists rejected marriage as an institution, arguing that neither State nor church had a place in regulating individual choices and that individuals should be free to enter and exit relations at will. Significantly, anarchists were the only ideological orientation in the nineteenth century that defended same-sex relationships,<sup>46</sup> and monogamy was rather thoroughly jettisoned. Fénéon, for example, maintained a life-long relationship with Camille Platteel even after marrying Fanny Goubaux, who was aware of the relationship with Camille from the beginning and acquiesced to its maintenance. And suffice it to say that Fénéon was by no means limited to two lovers.<sup>47</sup> In each of these areas, anarchists rejected traditional norms and, of course, the avant-garde in art was busily rejecting traditional artistic norms. In short, anarchists and artists at the end of the nineteenth century were thoroughly nonconformist.

Pissarro's art both anticipated this ethic and embodied it. Pissarro was completely ensconced in the worlds of art and anarchy, helping to construct the culture that came to define modernity. He was part of a vast intellectual and social network that energized late nineteenth-century France partly because the participants in that culture ardently believed they were mid-wives to revolution. The sense that the world was on the cusp of revolution was palpable. In our current post-Hope condition, it is difficult to fully appreciate the sense of anticipation, the manifest impatience with the past, and the yearning for freedom that led many to throw their lives into the battle. For such an endeavor, a vision of the future is necessary. Drawing on the work of Kropotkin, Reclus, and Grave, his favorite writers, Pissarro painted the anarchist future. It was, as Kropotkin predicted, a world in which labor was dignified, human relations horizontal, and needs were amply met without long, arduous hours of coerced work. It was Reclus's ecological paradise where humans and their environment coexisted, where nature would be nurtured by man rather than exploited and despoiled, where the landscape was not simply a background, but the vital force shaping and being shaped by man. It was Grave's future where art was for everyone and everyone an artist. Thanks to Richard Brettell, who has thoroughly uncovered the anarchist narrative in Pissarro's painting, we can now fully appreciate, share, and help build Pissarro's future.

## Notes

1. It should be noted that anarchism was very much a transnational movement and that the culture created was not limited by borders. From the 1870s through the 1920s State hostility toward the anarchist movement produced oppressive laws in Germany, France, Spain, and the United States, among others, sending many anarchists into exile, thus producing an anarchist diaspora. The history of this diaspora still needs to be written, but in this context it is important to note the enormous cross-fertilization and growth of the anarchist movement as a result of State oppression. For example, among the more than four million Italian emigrants around the turn of the twentieth century, many, perhaps most, not only wished one day to return, but in fact did. In the Italian-American anarchist community there may as well have been a regularly-scheduled shuttle across the Atlantic. [See: Michael Miller Topp, *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), and Davide Turcato, "Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885–1915," *IRSH* Vol. 52 (2007), pp. 407–444.] Villages in Italy were often directly linked to towns in the United States with similar industrial bases. For example, Barre Vermont, where Luigi Galleani published *Cronaca Sovversiva* beginning in 1903, attracted stonecutters from Carrara in Tuscany [Robin Hazard Ray, "No License to Serve: Prohibition, Anarchists, and the Italian-American Widows of Barre, Vermont, 1900–1920," *Italian Americana*, <http://www.italianamericana.com/ItalianAmericana2011/History.html>], while miners from Reggio Emilia settled in Pittsburgh (Topp, p. 31.). These immigrants recruited family and friends from home, and often returned home for visits or to remain for extended periods, carrying with them their anarchist pamphlets and books. [Andrew Hoyt, "Hidden Histories and Material Culture" (Claremont, CA: Unpublished paper, 2009).] The culture that emerged in *fin de siècle* France was no exception to the globalized values at the core of anarchist culture.
2. Tom Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880-1914* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007).
3. Bruce C. Nelson, *Beyond the Martyrs: A Social History of Chicago's Anarchists, 1870-1900* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1988); Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz, eds. *German Workers in Chicago: A Documentary History of Working-Class Culture from 1850 to World War I*. (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988); James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, The First Labor Movement and the Bombing That Divided Gilded Age America* (New York, NY: Pantheon, 2006); Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).
4. On the importance of seeing oneself in the movement, see L. Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

5. See J. Brecher, *Strike* (New York: South End Press, 1997).
6. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. (New York, NY: Belknap Press, 2002).
7. Chris Ealham, *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898-1937*. (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2010).
8. See *Still We Ride*, available at: <http://www.stillweridethemovie.com/>.
9. "Feeding Resistance: Food Not Bombs Members," Democracy Now! [http://www.democracynow.org/2011/6/24/feeding\\_resistance\\_food\\_not\\_bombs\\_members](http://www.democracynow.org/2011/6/24/feeding_resistance_food_not_bombs_members) (accessed December 18, 2012).
10. Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York, NY: Knopf., 1931).
11. On Most, see: F. Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980).
12. *Ibid.*
13. Goyens, 2007.
14. Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).
15. For general treatments of the period in France see R. Sonn, *Anarchism & Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); R. Carr, *Anarchism in France: The Case of Octave Mirbeau* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977); J.U. Halperin, *Felix Fénéon: Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988); J. Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France, 1880-1914* (Paris: Société Universitaire, 1955).
16. David Weir, *Anarchy & Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism*. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).
17. Louis Patsouras, *Anarchism of Jean Grave*. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2001).
18. Halperin, 1988.
19. Robert L. Herbert and Eugenia W. Herbert, "Artists and Anarchism: Unpublished Letters of Pissarro, Signac and Others," *The Burlington Magazine* 102:692 (November 1960), pp. 472-482.
20. Patsouras, pp. 25-26.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
22. The last issue of *Le Révolté* was March 14, 1885. The switch to *La Révolte* resulted from a desperate and ineffective effort to avoid legal responsibility for a fine assessed the journal for participating in an illegal lottery in support of military desertion. *Le Révolté* was issued semimonthly before May 1886 and afterwards was a four page weekly. The journal's circulation in 1886 was about 4,000 and by 1889 had grown to 6,000. See Patsouras, Chapter 4.
23. David F. Mayer, "*La Revolte: Le supplément littéraire*." ETD Collection for Fordham University. Paper AAI9628342. Available at: <http://fordham.bepress.com/dissertations/AAI9628342>.
24. Patsouras, p. 37.
25. Halperin, p. 26.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

27. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 23.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
30. For general works on Kropotkin, see C. Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism 1872-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); M.A. Miller, *Kropotkin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); B. Morris, *Kropotkin: The Politics of Community* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003); and G. Woodcock and I. Avakumovic, *The Anarchist Prince: A Biographical Study of Peter Kropotkin*, (New York: Schocken, 1971).
31. Eugenia W. Herbert, *The Artist and Social Reform: France and Belgium, 1885-1898*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 5.
32. Dana Ward, "Alchemy in Clarens: Kropotkin and Reclus, 1877-1881," *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, ed. Nathan Jun and Shane Wahl, (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010).
33. Peter Kropotkin, *Paroles d'un Révolté*, ed. Elisée Reclus. (Paris: Flammarion, 1885).
34. Herbert and Herbert, p. 481.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
36. Weir, p. 116.
37. Herbert 1961, p. 21.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.
40. Brettell 2011.
41. Herbert 1961, pp. 34-39.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 184, 188.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
45. Elisée Reclus, "On Vegetarianism". *Humane Review* (January 1901). Available:  
[http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/bright/reclus/onvegetarianism.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/reclus/onvegetarianism.html)
46. Terence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895-1917* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2008).
47. While it might be tempting to classify such behavior as French, as opposed to anarchist, free love was a major theme of anarchist culture far beyond France. For discussion of the issue in the U.S. context, see: Martin Henry Blatt, *Free Love & Anarchism: The Biography of Erza Heywood*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); and Taylor Stoehr, *Free Love in America: A Documentary History* (New York: AMS Press, 1979).

## **PART THREE**

### **ANARCHIST MANIFESTATIONS IN ART, MEDIA, AND CULTURE**



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# GUERRILLA COMMUNICATIONS: POSTER RESPONSES TO THE COUP OF 1936

HILARY GORDON

Political posters were a prevalent part of the visual fabric of Republican Spain from the first days of the Civil War. Spain's foreign minister, Alvarez de Vayo narrated this scene in his memoir:

Full-color posters, banners, and fliers, brandishing dramatic swaths of red and black or blue and yellow were all over the city: along the streets, taped to windows, tacked up on kiosks in every public square, on the interior walls of office buildings and private homes, in all the subway stations, on the sides of busses, trucks, and even trains. By the second week of the war, early in July of 1936, they were already defining the public space of major cities.<sup>1</sup>

This profuse consumption and publication of public imagery in the Republican zone were necessitated and enabled by the popular nature of the resistance during the first year of the war. The visually based, symbol rich, and textually limited format of posters was integral in communicating with and organizing a Spanish public, who remained nearly half illiterate, as well as to a growing international population, who would become integral to the war effort.<sup>2</sup> This chapter explains how poster campaigns targeting specific and immediate community needs emerged in response to the 1936 nationalist uprisings in Spain. It traces the ways that these efforts were tied to and shaped by labor and political groups, which supplied multiple poster production operations, provided outlets for artist connectivity, and incorporated wider international participation, enabling the deployment of a quick and adaptive poster communication strategy that could meet diverse local challenges. It will also provide contrast to this dynamic by looking at the ways republican poster efforts began to change as the war progressed and considering the characteristics of contemporaneous nationalist poster efforts.

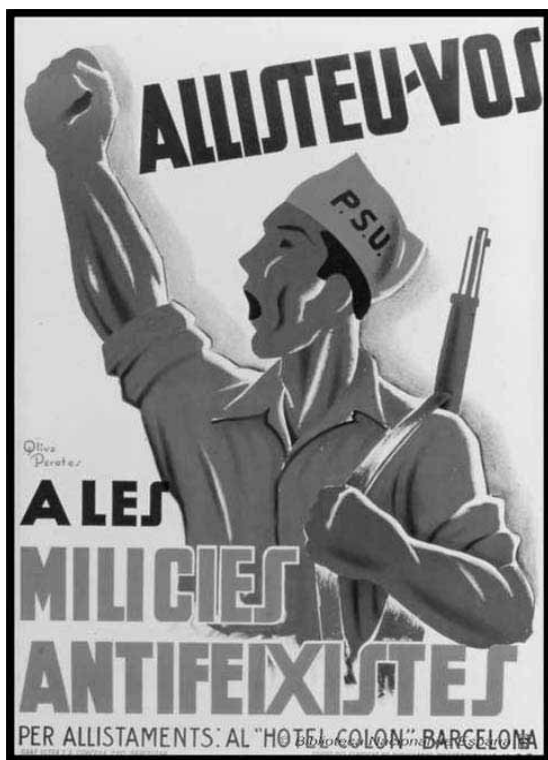
Connectivity and transportation networks in Spain broke down in the immediate wake of Franco's military coup, which began the war by attacking with a pincer movement on two main fronts, as well as through multiple and roughly simultaneous local uprisings. The smaller, splintered actions were led by the army's officer corps and often succeeded in causing increased community isolation. Many standard means of communication were disrupted, with telephone companies and hubs becoming spaces of contestation both immediately and throughout the coming war. The nationalist uprisers also focused efforts on destroying rail lines and bridges, further inhibiting connectivity and transportation. These issues meant that immediate defenses and resource needs would have to be organized on a local level, outside of large power structures, and using alternative systems of communication. Furthermore, since most of the standing army had sided with the rebellion, defenses and militias would have to be formed quickly from the masses.<sup>3</sup>

The immediate needs of Spain's communities to unify themselves and defend against the military coup were accompanied by the rise of organizational needs associated with the social revolution which had begun overtaking both major urban centers and rural agricultural districts as the fighting began. This mobilization was the culmination of long fermenting worker unrest across virtually all demographics of Spain. Industrial and port workers had long protested working conditions and standards of living in Spain's cities, miners from the mountainous regions had revolted only two years before, and agricultural workers had become increasingly active in their unwillingness to be economically chained to estates under horrible conditions and functionally ruled over by absentee landlords.<sup>4</sup>

This revolution meant that sweeping changes were taking place within local economies while they were still under attack. Many factories and industrial facilities were transitioned to run as worker-controlled collectives. Commercial and service industries were also sometimes collectivized. In agricultural areas, workers confiscated large tracts of land and reorganized the means of food production. As buildings and property were abandoned in the conflict, they were frequently confiscated to be redistributed or re-purposed under public ownership. Perhaps most significantly, social and welfare functions that had been previously addressed by central government or the Catholic Church were being rapidly replaced by community-managed human service and educational institutions.<sup>5</sup> All of these changes represented shifts to more popularized and localized control of decision making and the war effort, and all of them would require public support to take hold.

The challenges of increased isolation and the immediacy and variety of local needs affected community-level poster production shops in great numbers; they could act quickly and independently to produce small print runs that targeted a wide variety of issues and often called for specific public actions. This stood in contrast to poster production strategies in many contemporary conflicts. World War posters were generally produced in exceedingly large runs, at a small number of centralized locations, and with multiple levels of message oversight. They were distributed across large geographic areas and were often reprinted at later points in the conflicts, thus privileging messages designed for wide audiences and to meet generic, more long-term goals.<sup>6</sup>

This work by Oliva Perotés produced in Barcelona during the first months of the conflict displays common goals and key defining characteristics of early Republican posters.<sup>7</sup>



While its overt purpose was to recruit volunteers for the militias, it also called for unity among Barcelona's diverse workers expressed by the milician's hand gesture and donning of the *mono*. This traditional Spanish workers' overall was a widely understood invocation of worker solidarity which crossed language barriers as well as party lines.<sup>8</sup> Also notable are the clear temporality of the message and the specificity of audience and intended action. Recruits were directed to sign up at the Hotel Colón, a landmark along Barcelona's *Ramblas* which was used by the Catalan Socialist Party as a committee meeting hall and militia headquarters during the second half 1936.

In order to fuel the changes of the revolution, this poster also compelled the public to specific action.<sup>9</sup>



Directing consumers to participate in purchasing cooperatives in order to support workers' collectives that produced their goods, it assured the audience that this was the path to winning the war and stabilizing new economic changes and illustrates for us the perceived linkage between the social changes of the revolution and success in the wider war. Additionally, the work teaches us something of the systems of labor unions and collectives that gained influence during 1936. It shows individual trade groups working in concert with larger collectives defined by work type, all overseen by large confederations of these collectives and in concert with other non-worker collectives. This type of elaborate network came to form the basis of committee systems that would run many local governments after the initial fracas of the rebellion.

Labor and political groups affiliated with the anarchist and socialist parties would step in to fill many of the local power and organizational voids left in the wake of Franco's coup. They were already active in Spanish communities and had established infrastructures for communication and decision making that had been honed through the ongoing labor conflicts that plagued the pre-war years. They also had extensive resources as well as connections to wider workers' networks. These advantages allowed them to step in quickly and become main actors in community-level war responses and reorganizational efforts. Localities built upon the extant infrastructures of these groups to form the basis for a committee system which designated representatives to control local functions like transportation, production, policing, and the militias. These committees would come to control a wide variety of functions and comprised much of the governing in the Republic during 1936.<sup>10</sup>

This poster publicizing the efforts of a Barcelona mattress workers' collective shows the breadth of the mission being assumed by labor and political groups at the start of the war years.<sup>11</sup>



The symbols placed across the center of the image reinforced the fact that social concerns and mutual aid were being handled through community infrastructures right alongside the needs of war. Like the previous image, it shows us local systems of labor organization strongly overlapping with the systems of civil organization. This collective of mattress producers was part of a wider union of textile and garment workers which, in turn, was a constituent part of the wider anarchist labor umbrella group CNT along with its sister anarchist political group FAI. These were some of the most numerically significant groups of their kind, especially in the republican stronghold of Catalonia.

Most posters of the early conflicts were published through some collaboration with a trade affiliated or political group. Additionally, special-interest groups such as youth and social welfare organizations produced posters both with assistance from these wider groups and through independent workshops. Many of these groups had existed before the war, some emerged when graphic artists, fine artists, journalists, and print workers had their trades collectivized, and other groups emerged in response to the changing needs of the revolution as it unfolded. Journalist George Marion reported the cacophony of visual messages, “The Posters flow from a hundred sources. During the many months I was in Spain, I found the collection of posters just about a full-time job because there was no central source.”<sup>12</sup> This lack of central control enabled faster poster pro-

duction that could more easily address changing needs and contributed highly to the variability of produced works and their messages.

Association with political and labor groups often enabled artist's access to transportation resources, supply lines, and distribution networks integral to fueling a sustained propaganda response. However, these group affiliations did not inhibit individual artists from producing posters through a variety of outlets. Many formed and participated in independent workgroups which produced posters on their own and also contributed efforts to union shops.

Carles Fontserè revealed the freedom and variability of artists' earliest efforts through his narratives of Barcelona's Union of Professional Designers or SDP. It was the only plastic artists' trade union of its kind that had been organized before the war; however, members still lacked a specific plan of action as the fighting broke out. Fontserè and colleagues Riba Rovira and Jaume Sola took personal initiative. Sketching and painting in their own homes, they created some of the first posters of the war effort. SDP Union members such as Josep Bartoli and founder Helios Gomez, both of whom were also affiliated with the anarchist group FAI, took part in July's first armed struggles to defend Barcelona from the military coup. Other members meanwhile collaborated with the local militias to gather resources abandoned in the fray and to confiscate an aristocratic home that would be converted to a print shop for the union.<sup>13</sup>

Independent workshops were prevalent and often founded by professional artists with notoriety or access to printing resources from before the war. Still, many artists who produced posters through independent shops also worked on posters through local anarchist and socialist unions. In fact, in many cases artists painted posters without union labels or group insignias first, later figuring out how they would be produced and adding the designations just before printing.<sup>14</sup> A significant number of poster artists took advantage of these freedoms. Jose Bardasano founded and worked through an independent publishing shop called *La Galaffa*, alongside his wife Juana; however, Bardasano also produced posters for many other groups, and his wife was extensively involved with publications for women's rights organizations.<sup>15</sup> Also, Fontserè himself published many posters through anarchist and socialist unions in addition to his more independent SDP works.<sup>16</sup>

Some artists chose to work in the union halls near their own homes. Workers from outside of the city and international volunteers often lived in the "locals" as well. Members of the propaganda team were not segregated from the activities going on around them and had direct access to the wider war efforts.<sup>17</sup> Propagandist and militia-woman Mary Low described the

Barcelona union hall in the converted Hotel Falcon where she lived and worked, writing that she invariably fought for table space upon which to sketch, surrounded by the political talk of militiamen waiting for assignments and new volunteers eager to contribute. She emphasized the closeness of the propaganda team to the committee organizers and summarized, "Well, there was no sense of discipline, but a great friendliness, and a desire to collaborate."<sup>18</sup> Artists learned through this collaboration and were informed by the direct contact with militias and the decision-making bodies of the labor committees, and additionally, through contact with union organizers. This gave them an accurate idea of the developing war situations and kept them in touch with local needs.

Through these differing available outlets and the ability of artists to choose from and move among them, unions and political groups could provide resources and connectivity to local artists without hindering the variety and adaptability of the presented message. In this schema, a full variety of local needs could be brought to the table. Minority groups and smaller constituencies were less likely to be shut out, and needs of specific groups were not formally privileged.

This production dynamic also enabled artists to freely incorporate knowledge from their personal experiences into their artistic handling of the conflict. Artists like Jose Bardasano had witnessed first-hand the intermittent labor crises and violence of the pre-war years, and this made them uniquely suited to speak to local constituencies. When Bardasano was a child, his father was jailed for participation in workers' action and strike activity. He had spent time in the local jail with his father and in the labor halls with the radicalized workers of Madrid's socialist-affiliated trolley union. These experiences afforded him deep knowledge of the workers' concerns that fueled the revolution.<sup>19</sup>

Rey Vila, later known by the pen name "Sim," brought vastly different first-hand experience to the table. He was a university-trained artist, but had chosen a career in the military. His encounters with human suffering during service time in Africa convinced him of the need to be a part of sweeping social change at home. At the outbreak of war, he joined the militias of the anarchist FAI in order to document their stories through his art, engaging in a unique form of embedded journalism which would visually portray the efforts of the militia to the wider public.<sup>20</sup>

The variant histories and allegiances of these artists and their chosen ways of contributing to the poster effort added to its adaptability and overall success. Because they had the choice of a wide variety of outlets through which to apply their talents, and because their individual messages

were rarely censored or strictly guided, poster artists who were already tuned in to the needs of constituent groups could readily vocalize them.

These locally tuned propaganda artists were joined by an increasing contingent of foreign revolutionaries and intellectuals. Lois and Charles Orr arrived in 1936. The couple learned news of Spain's troubles and were so anxious to help with the revolution that they made a honeymoon of it.<sup>21</sup> Joining other volunteers to cross from France, Lois recalls,

That summer of 1936, as in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the roads of Southern France were alive with dissident artists, intellectuals, poets, and dreamers moving toward the Pyrenees in search of the Holy Grail. We did not seek it at Mont Salvat, as the Cathars did, but beneath Barcelona's Mont Tibadabo and in the foothills of Madrid's Guadarrama Mountains, where The Revolution was to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth<sup>22</sup>

While most often connected to the conflict through trade union or political affiliation, surprisingly large numbers of workers arrived independently to work alongside union groups. Still, the International Brigades created through the Communist Party were the largest single group of foreign participants, and many other arrivals were affiliated with the International Labor Party.

Many of these artists and intellectuals would come to provide valuable experience, were highly trained in the arts, and had been involved with other workers' revolutions.<sup>23</sup> Artist Mary Low and her husband Juan Brea were two of these foreign participants, arriving in Spain during 1936 to join the POUM. Low, an experienced painter and editor, would come to produce English versions of POUM publications, such as "The Spanish Revolution," and to create propaganda images that would be distributed outside Spain.<sup>24</sup>

Lois Orr's biographer also stressed the importance of the experiences brought to Spain by international intellectuals, telling us that, "her belief in the universal applicability of time-tested models of how to bring about radical social change outweighed considerations of local political culture and the peculiarities of the Catalan Left."<sup>25</sup> Many of the international participants arrived with established printing and distribution strategies based upon experiences where breakdowns in power and communication structures were the norm and message distribution at the local level was key. Many had also dealt with mobilizing largely illiterate populations, or populations which did not have a single predominant language. Both describe the case in Spain.<sup>26</sup>

The widespread participation of Internationals alongside native artists only added to the strategic adaptability of the Republican propaganda effort. Not only did they add diversity, but also experienced outside viewpoints that stressed boundary-crossing worker solidarity. These outside voices of the Internationals, conscious of wider trends, were the natural foils of the locally attuned native propaganda artists already at work in Spain.

As 1936 wore on, the Republic began to lose ground and physical threats increased. British veteran Margret Palmer commented: "What surprised me most was the amount of cultural and intellectual activity that was being carried on in this bombarded city with the trenches within about thirty minutes' walk from the centre."<sup>27</sup> Increasingly accepting the prospect of a prolonged war, Republican central government would begin pushing to unify the widely disparate infrastructures that had evolved in the first months of conflict under a single command. Efforts to regain central control would come to include the dissolution of much of the union-organized "Popular Front" militia structure, the local committee system, and many of the collectives.<sup>28</sup> From the beginning, these efforts included a highly planned poster communication strategy largely focusing on unity and discipline.

While both the Republic and Catalonia had propaganda ministries long before the war, the poster production of local groups had dwarfed theirs for most of 1936. This trend began to shift with the wider changes in the war, and posters sponsored by government agencies were increasing rapidly along with Republican goals of public allegiance. The increase occurred at a time when locally available supplies for publishing, especially high-quality paper, were becoming scarcer and smaller organizations were having more trouble achieving poster saturation on their own. Government agencies also had the advantages of access to wide-reaching hierarchies and printing technologies that were beyond the access of local groups. At the end of 1936, the Ministry of Public Instruction was additionally activated, which included a specific department for fine arts, with a plastic arts division devoted nearly entirely to posters. All of these situations contributed to growing dominance of government sponsored poster efforts.<sup>29</sup>

This government ministry poster was part of a series created to recognize the anniversary of the civil war.



Like many other posters produced by government agencies during late 1936 and early 1937, it aimed at developing republican unity and assured that a unified rearguard was the key to winning the war. It also presented a more subtle message which belies the contemporaneous troubles of schism on the left, intimating through the intense stares and clasped hands that workers should refocus their attention onto the greatness of the Republic, represented as an allegory. While the poster could be construed as having some temporality, in a way meeting a direct need. It lacks the same adaptability and responsiveness of earlier works, was produced in large runs, and is aimed at a significantly wider audience.<sup>30</sup>

Changes in the wider war effort of the Republic radically altered the situational dynamics that had shaped early poster efforts, and many government-sponsored posters were produced and deployed in a significantly different manner than the earlier posters. The Republic targeted and controlled the messages presented in most of their posters, rather than allow-

ing artists to dictate content. They also produced larger runs of posters directed at much wider audiences, turning away from the frequent specificity of locality and action seen in earlier works. These changes drastically lessened the adaptability of central government poster strategies, disallowing them the ability to respond to specific needs and narrowing their influence to a much smaller range of ideas.

Definitive contrast to the 1936 posters of the resistance can also be revealed through consideration of early poster efforts in the nationalist zone. No equivalent rise in the popular distribution and consumption of printed media occurred there and grassroots production efforts were virtually non-existent. Even today, these images remain far less numerous than those of the opposing side and are much more difficult to locate.<sup>31</sup>

This can be partially explained by the limited avenues available for poster production within the Franquist schema. While the central state was far from the only means of message dissemination for the Republic, the nature of public communication was radically different on the hierarchical nationalist side, where control and unification of fascist ideology and identity were prioritized over the dangers of individual expressions of fascism. Whereas dozens of groups produced Republican posters within Spain, nationalist posters there were produced, with few exceptions, only through the Falange and the army.<sup>32</sup> This strict control of output was enabled by rapidity with which singular command was achieved by the rebels.

One could also explain the lower concentration and quality of propaganda posters on the side of the rebellion by citing the movement's focus on and control by the military. This is shown by the disparate nature of efforts to organize early production and their later control by General Serrano Suner, a leader with no experience in propaganda communication and little attention to its integral nature. His strategy would be to entrust these efforts to a series of intellectuals within the Falange, a group known for and based upon its rigid combat focus and espousal of an ascetic military style of life. Dr. Ricardo de la Cierva, Madrid University professor and war witness says of the Franquist leadership, "they were not excessively respectful of intellectual nuances that led them to comprehend the importance of the systems of message diffusion."<sup>34</sup> In the nationalist zone, everything was subordinate to the military effort itself. This type of leadership precipitated the limited scope and distribution of poster propaganda and served to color its content.<sup>35</sup>

There was also a more practical reason for the lower poster production on the nationalist side; the rebellion had failed to take over the Madrid and Barcelona, the two central cities of artistic production in Spain. Both supplies and printing equipment were concentrated in these urban areas. Fur-

thermore, most members of the artisan class had remained loyal to the Republic or lived in loyal areas where dissidence was dangerous.<sup>36</sup>

This lack of resources and leadership initiative resulted in posters which were usually smaller in size, limited to black and white, and of relatively lower print quality than those of their counterparts. This poster is representative of many produced by the Falange.



It simply features lettered war slogans and component symbols of the fascist parties, and much of the work was aided by templates. In contrast to early Republican posters, this work displays no specific need or intended action, and the audience is non-specific.<sup>37</sup>

Many early nationalist posters were produced by untrained artists using inferior materials. This included the many posters produced with pre-made lettering templates that simply featured widely recognizable texts, such as war slogans or quotes, or bore only symbols or titles representing the various groups allied within the rebellion. A significant number of nationalist posters were simply reproductions of photographs. Images reproduced from the works of Spanish portrait artists were also liberally repeated in the media.<sup>38</sup>

By looking at the changes in the republican poster tradition as the war set in and considering the poster efforts of the nationalists. We can discern how the resources and ideologies of the conflicts shaped those traditions in different ways, also helping us understand how the conditions in the wake

of Franco's coup shaped the early publications of local loyalist groups. Faced with the problems of communications breakdowns and connectivity issues, they created a more locally-focused poster effort. Plagued by imminent needs, rather than wider philosophical goals, they created a poster effort that could respond quickly without slowing centralization and oversight. Suffering from lack of resources and administration, they employed the extant networks of union and political groups to refuel and connect. Responsible for wide-ranging functions in the wake of local infrastructure shutdown, they enabled a poster tradition that encompassed diverse voices and demographics to meet a variety of needs. From these sorts of comparisons, it is plain to see how the characteristic poster strategies of the early-war Republic arose in direct response to changing situations on the ground and why these strategies fell apart as the dynamics of the war shifted.

## Notes

1. Julio Alvarez De Vayo, *Give Me Combat: the Memoirs of Julio Alvarez de Vayo*, trans. Donald Walsh (Boston: Little and Brown Company, 1973), p. 47.
2. Jordi Carulla and Arnou Carulla, *El Color de La Guerra* (Barcelona: Postermill, 2000), pp. 7-9. They give a 45 percent illiteracy statistic here, and this roughly corresponds to the numbers of many other sources which place this rate right around fifty percent—e.g., Gerald Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: The Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 49-51.
3. Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979). A good summary of the situation is Raymond Carr, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures* (New York: Norton, 1989).
4. Gerald Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: The Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: 1936- 1939* (London: Dorsey Press, 1989).
5. Jose Peirats, *La CNT en la Revolucion Espanola* (Madrid: Carjahal, 1978); Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
6. Steve Baker, "Describing Images of the National Self: Popular Accounts of the Construction of Pictorial Identity in the First World War Poster," *Oxford Art Journal* 13:2 (1990), pp. 24-30; Eberhard Demm, "Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28:1 (1993), pp. 163-192.
7. Olivera Perotes, "Allistau Vau" (PSUC: 1936) *Carteles de la Guerra Civil*, *Biblioteca Digital Hispanica*, *Biblioteca Nacional de Espana*.
8. *Letters From Barcelona: An American Woman in Revolution and Civil War*,

- ed. Gerd Reiner Horn (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009).
9. "Confederacio de Cooperatives" (CNT: 1936) *Carteles de la Guerra Civil*, *Biblioteca Digital Hispanica*, *Biblioteca Nacional de Espana*.
10. Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years, 1868- 1936* (New York: 1977); Peirats 1978.
11. "Industria Obrera Colectivizada" (CNT- AIT: 1936) *Carteles de la Guerra Civil*, *Biblioteca Digital Hispanica*, *Biblioteca Nacional de Espana*.
12. George Marion to *Time Magazine*, New York (March 1, 1938), Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives.
13. James Miravittles and Carles Fontserre, *Carteles de la Republica y de la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: La Gaya Ciencia, 1978).
14. *Ibid.*
15. Julien Gonzalez, *El Cartel Republicana en la Guerra Civil Espanola* (Madrid, 1993)
16. Miravittles and Fontserre 1978.
17. Fraser, 1979.
18. Mary Low and Juan Brea, *Red Spanish Notebook* (London: Seker, 1937), p. 36.
19. Gonzalez 1993; Alexander Vergara, *The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD's Southworth Collection* (San Diego: University of California Regents, 1998).
20. Vergara 1998.
21. Horn 2009.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Robert L. Herbert and Eugenia W. Herbert, "Artists and Anarchism: Unpublished letters of Pissarro, Signac, and Others," *The Burlington Magazine* 102:693 (1960), pp. 517-522.
24. Low and Brea 1937.
25. Horn, p. 33.
26. Chris Ealham, *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2010)
27. Margaret Palmer and Garnett McCoy, eds., "Letters from Spain, 1936-1939", *Archives of the American Art Journal* 30:1 (1986), pp. 2-20.
28. Bolloten 1991.
29. Josep M. Sole and Joan Villaroya, *Guerra I Propaganda: Fotografies de Comissariat de Propaganda, 1936- 1939* (Barcelona: Viena Edicions, 2006), pp. 55-76.
30. Adelardo Parilla Candella, "Unidos en la Retaguardia" (Ministerio de Propaganda de Madrid: 1937), *Biblioteca Digital Hispanica*, *Biblioteca Nacional de Espana*
31. The special collections of the Young Research Library hold the Del Amo Spanish Civil War Collection, which contains a significant number of these.
32. A vibrant and active propaganda campaign supporting Spanish fascism did go on in many places outside of Spain.
34. Ricardo de la Cierva, "Introduction to the Del Amo Spanish Civil War

Collection,” Special Collections of the Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

35. *Ibid.*
36. Miravittles and Fontserè 1978.
37. Martín, “*Arriba España!*”, (Falange Española) *Carteles de la Guerra Civil*, *Biblioteca Digital Hispanica*, *Biblioteca Nacional de España*.
38. While these simpler designs were most prevalent, the Nationalists did come to employ more nuanced visual propaganda as a part of their wider effort to unify the National Fascist Body through the standardization of ideal personal body presentations and practices.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ACROSS CARDEW/CALIBAN: TOWARDS AN ANARCHIC ASSEMBLING OF REVOLUTIONARY PHENOMENA

EDUARDO F. ROSARIO

As Herbert Marcuse wrote in 1977, “Eros and Thanatos cannot be dissolved into problems of class struggle.”<sup>1</sup> And no matter what the outcome of such struggle might be, what advanced capitalism might portray, what technological progress might be achieved, what society might bring forth, it “would not signal the end of art, the overcoming of tragedy, the reconciliation of the Dionysian and the Apollonian.”<sup>2</sup> Art, through the aesthetic experience, can prompt revolutionary potential by depicting the mechanisms of an unconquerable nature, emphasizing dynamisms that stand outside the relations of production of a particular context while exposing them as historical contingencies. Therefore, art interacts reciprocally with the revolutionary display itself as the condition of that which resists being identified and reduced to a specific body without inevitably nullifying itself: it emerges through its chaotic behavior and not by a particular representation. Narratives have been outlined across history on how to undertake the revolutionary deed in its manifold appearances; and even as some of these have been “surpassed by historical development,”<sup>3</sup> they are all somewhat linked by a common thread. In regard to the aforementioned, I would like to ask: what are we colloquially referring to when we talk about the *revolutionary*? What is its relation to *art* and “where ought one to find [its] *locus*”<sup>4</sup> (geographically, conceptually or otherwise)? Rudi Dutschke proposed some time ago that “today we are not bound together by an abstract theory of history but by an existential disgust.”<sup>5</sup> And similar to Marcuse, he also declared that “There no longer exists a sphere in our society which would be exclusively privileged to express the interests of the whole movement in its cultural revolutionary phase.”<sup>6</sup> So, where does this leave all the artifacts that were

once means articulating the revolutionary itself and how do we relate to them? How, as if having glanced at the Medusa, can they become stone: reified and disarmed? “Because of everything that is dwarfed vulgarity must be overcome”<sup>7</sup> or else be deemed inefficient for its immediate futility.

“Malraux developed a beautiful philosophical concept about art. He said, ‘Art is the only thing that resists death.’”<sup>8</sup> And we should ask ourselves, what are the mechanisms that *art* and the *revolutionary* share and how do they become manifest? As for this problem, I’d like to take Cornelius Cardew as our subject of inquiry—not a subordinated one, but one that is analogous to Roberto Fernández Retamar’s *Caliban*: he’ll become our “conceptual persona.”<sup>9</sup> Both characters—although the former is fictitious and the latter historical—share a twofold existence: *the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce*.<sup>10</sup> Hence we face two particular concerns: what does the collusion between a *fictitious* personage and a *historical* one bring forth; and how, accordingly, do we understand and employ the concepts of *tragedy* and *farce*? There is *Cardew*, one of the main figures within Britain’s postwar music avant-garde, whose inflamed social commitment—characterized by the immediacy, urgency and precariousness of the radical political act—was simultaneously transmutable with art itself. And there is *Caliban*, a character from William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* that has gone through multiple incarnations across history, from Columbus to Retamar, becoming through the latter a symbol of cultural resistance to colonialism in Latin America and the Caribbean. Both bear a potential in relation to that which cuts and resists a halt in the fluctuations that give transitory forms to the mechanisms of the revolutionary.

Through the Cardew/Caliban mirror experiment, we can obtain interesting information regarding their potentialities by performing an analogical analysis between them. Cardew’s brutal denunciation of the musical avant-garde in both hemispheres—archetypically embodied by the personae of John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen (with whom he held an influential relationship)—takes on a completely new connotation when compared with Caliban’s curse upon Prospero for having been taught his *language*<sup>11</sup> (as in, how could there be any transference if not through a common channel?). Caliban’s condemnation—which consists not only of verbal expression but also of a complete assimilation of Prospero’s aesthetic order—relies on such language, simultaneously becoming a transgression of his new self. Retamar uses this allegory to articulate phenomena that go beyond its immediate symbolic target (Prospero), towards the bigger image of colonialism’s hegemonic domination over

Caribbean and Latin American cultures, as evidenced in its incapacity to “talk” except through (or in relation to) languages imported from Europe. Cardew’s rant, similarly, adheres to language, but it must be re-contextualized by considering him a member of the community against which he reacts—analogically resembling Caliban’s attack upon himself for becoming other. As a member and therefore a symbol of another paradigmatic community, a distorted mirror image of Prospero, Caliban’s attack is enunciated through and against Prospero’s language. Cardew also became someone else through the language of political ideology (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism), which is also an assimilatory, homogenizing mechanism; in performing against his own, like Caliban did, Cardew’s language similarly backfires into a negation of the language employed, simultaneously urging an existence beyond flesh. Accordingly, we could state that Cardew’s accusation was not executed against Cage or Stockhausen in particular; instead, by making him transcend the immediate context, like Caliban did through Retamar (identifying dynamisms irreducible to the specific situation), Cardew rejects being reduced to univocal historical representation. As he expressed in the introduction to *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*: “The violence of the attack on them is indicative of the strength of their hold on us; a powerful wrench was required to liberate us from this particular entanglement”<sup>12</sup>—where “them” represents a turning into stone, having looked at the Medusa; and the “wrench” represents a potential liberation fueled by an unquenchable desire to constantly *become* beyond ontological restraints.

How a particular personage can become a *multitude*—by embracing a plethora of forms throughout history, even the form of *multitudes* themselves—is what interests me most. Herein is expressed one of the mechanisms that gives birth to revolutionary phenomena, one that has a capacity to cut across history, chaotically becoming-into, although not subordinated to a universal dialectic or necessary truth. Cardew’s influence still palpitates vehemently in many ways within contemporary political/artistic fields, a ubiquity that resists being reduced to its flesh-form; however, Caliban has already embraced such transcendence, emancipating himself from historical restraints. Whereas the former lives funneled into a flesh-only existence, and is consulted as such, the latter has opened up like an umbrella, extending dialogues throughout his multiple selves: from Cardew’s childhood as a choirboy at the Canterbury Cathedral School and his studies in the Royal Academy of Music, to Caliban’s precursor in “caniba,” or “people of the great Can” (as written by Christopher Columbus in his diaries),<sup>13</sup> from Cardew’s assistance in composing Stockhausen’s *Carré*, and later staging works by the New York

School, to Michel de Montaigne's essay *On Cannibals* (whose translation into English, by Giovanni Floro, was known to have inspired Shakespeare's personage);<sup>14</sup> from Cardew's transition from being one of Britain's main experimental composers—with pieces like *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns* and *Treatise* (inspired by Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*)—to composer of "People's Liberation Music"; to Caliban's birth through *The Tempest*, becoming the pivotal focus of early interpretations of "savages" prompted by Ernst Renan, Paul Groussac, Aimé Césaire, et al.; from Cardew's political career as member of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), from whose vantage point his attacks upon the postwar avant-garde were drafted, to Retamar's *Calibanesque* approach to Caribbean and Latin American cultures as an anthropophagic plurality, inspired by José Martí's "*nuestra América mestiza*"; from Cardew's killing, over thirty years ago "by a hit-and-run driver"<sup>15</sup> while "walking in the dark from Stratford station to his home in Leyton"<sup>16</sup> in "an apparent accident that conspiracy theorists have liked to construe as the work of the intelligence services,"<sup>17</sup> to Caliban's existence as that which *resists death*.

The transcendence of the personage beyond its delimited plane of articulation happens as the result of an empathic interrelation, whereby one experiences a mutual aesthetic dissolution of both subjectivities as historical contingencies instead of natural necessities. "This transcendence occurs in the collision with their *Lebenswelt*, through events which appear in the context of particular social conditions while simultaneously revealing forces not attributable to these specific conditions."<sup>18</sup> A restructuring takes place, not physically, but empirically, by experiencing alternative ways of channeling aesthetic fluxes, whereby our wild perception can prompt new cognitive processes, simultaneously suggesting new possibilities regarding social relations previously unavailable in the given context. If we employ this inherent capacity (as witnessed through Shakespeare's Caliban), towards non-literary texts (like Cornelius Cardew's life), a corresponding identification is experienced which exposes a reciprocity between *fictional* and *historical* personages and reveals that there are no necessary differences in between, beyond the vulgar fact that one is made of ink and the other (was) made of flesh, beyond how we interact with them according to established aesthetic categories of perception, knowledge, and understanding. Generally, we exercise upon each *one* an exclusive mode of interpretation regarding what kind of text they make, and what function they're meant to perform, in order to make them intelligible within our aesthetic organizing of information and cognitive processes. An actual difference is that the former is preeminent and oriented towards a pluralist existence owing to its open condition

(whereby coming to life is the unavoidable result of creative interpretations) whereas the latter, although variably regarded (biographies also employ equivalent procedures), is anchored and construed from a fixed historical paradigm. However, these have to be freed from such foundations and invested with an anarchic hermeneutic interchangeability in which history can be read as poetry, fiction as newspapers, chemistry as love letters, phonebooks as conceptual writing, manifestos as astrology, or this chapter as a collage, as a way to generate new knowledge leading to alternative dynamisms. “There is a continuity of all things that make classifications fictions. Even so, all human knowledge depends upon arrangements. Then all books— scientific, theological, philosophical—are only literary.”<sup>19</sup> Take any assortment of subjects across history, from Jean Genet’s protagonists in *Un Chant d’Amour*, to Leonard Matlovich’s tombstone; from Arthur Russell’s *World of Echo*, to the “Untitled” portraits by Félix González Torres; from the proletariat in Karl Marx’s *Das Kommunistische Manifest*, to the young poet of Bernard Alois Zimmerman’s *Requiem Für Einen Jungen Dichter*; from Luisa Capetillo in *Mi Opinión sobre las libertades, derechos y deberes de la mujer como compañera, madre y ser independiente*, to Ángelamaría Dávila’s *Animal Fiero y Tierno*; from the photographs of Thích Quảng Đức’s self-immolation, to the arsons following Mark Duggan’s killing by the police; from Hans Werner Henze’s *El Cimarrón (Biographie des geflohenen Sklaven Esteban Montejo)*, to Assata Shakur’s activism and subsequent Cuban exile; from Severino Di Giovanni’s love letters to Josefina Scarfó, to the communiqués of Radio Alice; they all suffer from an irreducible condition as *tragedies*. These shouldn’t be necessarily delimited to fatality—as being born constitutes the first tragic act—nor reduced to funnels for unrelated figures in an all-encompassing category; but instead, from the broadest perspective, as a violent collision with existence and the outcome of such a dynamic. What tragedies do is open up a space for possibility: a *what if?* These tragedies are charged with an empathic longing for overthrowing history’s univocal judgment upon them, which opens parallel fissures of articulation. Through empathy, we develop a trans-historical conspiracy with the personage—we as vessels, heirs of their tragedies, a second chance; they as vehicles, or subjective mechanisms, towards the overthrowing of a tyrannical vulgarity. When we attempt to construct a potential Cardew, we inevitably face ourselves with a *multitude* of possible prospects through each of our individual rendezvous with him. A poem, a photograph, a journal entry, a piece of clothing, a sound recording, a love letter, a novel, a distant relative, an anecdote, personal belongings of all sorts—any assemblage of historical/fictitious fragments

helps us build paradigms which behave like compositions in open-form, like Roman Haubenstock-Ramati's *Mobile for Shakespeare* or Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*); like *La Passion Selon Sade* by Syvano Bussotti or Bernard Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*. Every new component reconfigures the time continuum: past, present and future reinvent themselves in a rather circular causality. "The aesthetic transformation is achieved through a reshaping of language, perception, and understanding so that they reveal the essence of reality in its appearance: the repressed potentialities of man and nature."<sup>20</sup> According to Marcuse, "the radical qualities of art, that is to say, its indictment of the established reality and its invocation of the beautiful image (*schöner Schein*) of liberation are grounded precisely in the dimensions where art transcends its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behavior while preserving its overwhelming presence."<sup>21</sup> The beautiful surpasses itself as "a kind of ideality akin to rational perfection"<sup>22</sup> to become a tragic space of possibility. Art effectuates a process of mimesis from which it draws its immediate materials, but these, once subjected to aesthetic stylization, reveal "the universal in the particular social situation,"<sup>23</sup> such that "any historical reality can become 'the stage' for such mimesis."<sup>24</sup> Although Cardew's artistic work was in direct exchange with his life's political ventures, art's relation to praxis is an intermediary one: "Art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, by experiencing Cardew's life through the mechanisms of a work of art, we unleash a process of subjectification among individuals from different epochs. "That means that we should not focus on the identity, but on the process of becoming."<sup>26</sup>

When accounting for Cardew's tragedy, we shouldn't repudiate it on the basis of its contemporary futility or in relation to its direct transposition into the present context, but instead we should try to look beyond its historical restraints for that which can be turned into a weapon. "There are no new ideas, just new ways of giving those ideas we cherish breath and power in our own living."<sup>27</sup> No discourse is ever rendered obsolete by itself, but by the way it is employed. In this way mechanisms inherited from specific revolutionary struggles shouldn't be literally adopted or discarded, but *tragically* experimented with as spaces of possibility—by acknowledging that there are no universal revolutionary means; that by giving a fixed form to the revolution, we are mistaking means with ends; that once means are reified they're not exclusive to the revolutionary subject; that there are, nevertheless, dynamics which cut

across time and space; that these can help us develop revolutionary mechanisms of our own (though not in relation to a universal dialectic) which, as phenomena generated within a chaotic motion, could be denounced and relinquished if reduced to any of its particular manifestations. This notion simultaneously overwhelms its immediate context and takes from it, working *in* and *against*. To be exclusively *in* (as a member of a chosen class) won't unleash any action in itself, while to be only *against* (as mirrored antagonism) might render it obsolete. This is very explicit in Retamar's *Calibanesque* approach where, in taking from Caliban's origin as "*canibal*" (in Spanish), he develops an anthropo(phagic/logic) conception of Caribbean and Latin American culture, enunciated in how its pluralistic character corresponds to a devouring of every culture imported, but instead of vulgarly assimilating any of these, a third, more complex creature is born. Cardew should aim at this pluralist resistance to death, transcending his univocal historical context, overcoming tragedy, while being devoured by a multitude, nullifying himself if ever portrayed as a reified entity. His reduction to a unique body vulgarly disarms him; to establish a universal dialectic disarms him.

Spontaneous manifestations of dis/order happen throughout chaotic phenomena; similarly, this constant becoming into multitudes manifests itself as a series of chaotic *farces*. These articulations, nevertheless, might serve as a dual performance either as frivolous modeling of dead fur or as perverse transgressions of tragedies. An "anthropophagic" approach to Cardew's tragedy may well become a complex of new farces. Like Paul Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism, "we may use [these as] hypotheses that contradict well-confirmed theories and/or well-established experimental results."<sup>28</sup> Each tragedy has the potential of disclosing the kind of counter-information that farces can employ. "We need an *external* standard of criticism, criticism; we need a set of alternative assumptions or, as these assumptions will be quite general, constituting, as it were, an entire alternative world, *we need a dream-world in order to discover the features of the real world we think we inhabit* (and which may actually be just another dream-world)."<sup>29</sup> There is a danger of losing the capacity to ignite a rebellious potential, if while embarking on these processes, both subjectivities fail to release themselves from the aesthetic structures within which they are held. Perversion is a mode of transcending existence as tragedy, by transgressing it; one empathically overcomes the specific situation, through other subjects, but cynically deprives them of their immediate paradigm by plastic manipulation in a somewhat sadomasochistic form. Everything is used playfully, from ideas to forms, from contexts to perception. Everything is mutilated in favor of using both

realities against each other. Through farces, we take things and give them localized relevance while subverting them; otherwise, we are just bearing living testimony to something dead. Efficacy should be measured in terms of how these processes actually unleash new subjectivities by auguring the revolutionary, by abandoning means that have already been disarmed and fetishized, and not by how close we can come to reproducing a specific tragedy's mechanisms. "The transcendence of immediate reality shatters the reified objectivity of established social relations and opens a new dimension of experience: rebirth of the rebellious subjectivity."<sup>30</sup> For Burke, "the revolutionaries who seek to 'strip all the decent drapery of life' from political power and de-aestheticize it are in danger of exposing the phallus of this transvestite law, which decks itself out as a woman. Power will thus cease to be aestheticized and what will connect us to it will be less our affections than the gallows."<sup>31</sup> Even acts that might have been considered failures cannot be deemed as much on the basis of strategic considerations alone. "A great sense of failure couches every success."<sup>32</sup> And maybe success wasn't meant for the event's specific moment of articulation, but for eternity, as an always positively charged space of possibility, since every so-called failure is delivered to us as a tragedy, a virtue capable of provoking an existential disgust.

Cardew and his colleagues faced a problem back then, when a small faction of The Scratch Orchestra—a guerrilla-like ensemble devoted to the performance of experimental and free-improvised music—decided to form an *Ideology Group*. This ensemble brought together a considerable amount of people for whom a *Draft Constitution* was sketched by Cardew as a way to conceptually organize them. But the Ideology Group had "proved a challenge to many of the active members who remain[ed] unconvinced, even suspicious and afraid of the demand by the 'Communists' that the Scratch Orchestra get involved actively in the class struggle."<sup>33</sup> Prior to this, they had already "experienced the true nature of [their] almost total incompetence and total irrelevance" when trying to conduct activities towards oppressed and marginalized communities as a mechanism of ideological influence. "In the 1960s, in radical circles of the 'free music' movement, *freedom* was an ethical and political, as well as an aesthetic, concept."<sup>34</sup> Franco Evangelisti, for example, a member of *Il Gruppo di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza* who was motivated by strong communist leanings, had left composition, under the pretext of its being a dead and decadent act and of reconciling his ideas with the practice of collective improvisation. There were strategic stunts which automatically jeopardized the subversive revolutionary potential; instead of embracing their own idiosyncratic aspects, these were reduced to a mere transposition

of ideology into aesthetics, merging them with the reality they wanted to overthrow, forging its own impossibility. "There were some lasting effects nonetheless, and in a small way, at least, the world *was* changed."<sup>35</sup> How, then, can the practice of free-improvisation function as a metaphor of the revolutionary in its calibanesque multiplicity, its periodic transforming of nature and reinventing of the time-continuum? The immediacy, urgency and precariousness in it is equivalent to that of the revolutionary act—immediate in its historical consciousness, urgent in its unquenchable disgust, and precarious in its chaotic transience. "This universe—unlike the physical universe, which is presumably the effect of one primal cause, or Big Bang—is an endless series of 'little bangs,' in which new universes are constantly being created."<sup>36</sup> Within this microcosm there's a constant paradigm modulation akin to the unleashing of wild subjectivities, as if nature were experienced not through the lens of an aesthetic order, but through chaotically dancing over a cartographic display of each one of these.

A mobile hierarchy exists which determines how revolutionary acts should be pursued in relation to their historical uses; all these tactics have been passed through generations as religious lore. The weight of these, nonetheless, can usually crush alternative forms of revolutionary phenomena not necessarily concerned with the same goals toward which the aforementioned tactics are targeted. These can, in fact, become a heavy, oppressive burden when presented as the only way to prompt action, specifically when our intuition tells us the opposite. At the root of everything expressed before, rests our intuition. It acts as the mechanism which aesthetically identifies that overwhelming nature. When we feel that the means attributed to the revolutionary are no longer exclusive to its protagonists—because any fixed or universal mechanism mainly works as an alternative, equally repressive, somewhat spectacular and not necessarily relevant to the order one wants to overthrow—we may then proceed to forsake them, to build new mechanisms, new *farces*, of our own. However, the notion of *farce* is just a *farce* to stimulate this dynamic. It is not that revolutionary phenomena cannot be articulated in one's actual time-space, but that perhaps these cannot be articulated through the means established beforehand. There isn't only one way to pursue the revolutionary. It doesn't fit in a particular aesthetic form. Unlike some activists, who are worried about academics analyzing their activities for the state, maybe we should start by defying any preconceived notions about revolutionary activities. Therefore, to sketch the possibility of anarchically assembling revolutionary phenomena, we must acknowledge our *particularity* within a series of *particularities*. In our minds there

ought to be chaos, which is constituted neither as order nor disorder, but as our own particular dis/order. And this should be expressed in how we organize ourselves. Like Cardew/Caliban, the revolutionary should aim to portray a multitude of faces, of possible forms; never subordinating itself to a fixed dialectic; always surging ahead in the overcoming of tragedies, as new farces, as an anthropophagic malleability that devours not only every reference, but even itself, as a necessary step in its resistance to death. As composer Wolfgang Rihm said: “I am for chaos, for bringing something forth out of chaos which, countering chaos with chaos, can generate more chaos; really, a more anarchic approach.”<sup>37</sup> And to pursue the revolutionary, it is unavoidable to navigate such waters.

## Notes

1. Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
4. Carl Oglesby, “Introduction to ‘On Anti-authoritarianism’ by Rudi Dutschke, *The New Left Reader*, ed. Carl Oglesby (New York: Evergreen Black Cat/Grove Press, Inc., 1969), p. 243.
5. Rudi Dutschke, “On Anti-authoritarianism,” in Oglesby, p. 251.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
7. Renzo Novatote, *Toward the Creative Nothing* (Los Angeles: Venomous Butterfly Publications, 2000), p. 54.
8. Gilles Deleuze, “What is the Creative Act?”, in *French Theory in America*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer and Sande Cohen (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 106.
9. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, quoted in Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Todo Caliban* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2003), p. 99.
10. Carlos Marx, *El dieciocho brumario de Luis Bonaparte* (México, D. F.: Colección 70, Editorial Grijalbo S. A., 1974), p. 17.
11. Retamar, p. 25.
12. Cornelius Cardew, *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism, and Other Articles* (London: Ubuclassics, 2004), p. 6.
13. Retamar, p. 27.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
15. Richard Gott, “Liberation Music” (review of John Tilbury, *Cornelius Cardew: A Life Unfinished*), *London Review of Books* (March 12, 2009), pp. 9-11.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Marcuse, p. 23.
19. Charles Fort, *Wild Talents* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2006), p. 31.

20. Marcuse, p. 8.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
22. Terry Eagleton, "The Ideology of the Aesthetic," *Poetics Today* 9:2 (1988), p. 328.
23. Marcuse, p. 23.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
26. Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, "What is the Meaning of Autonomy Today?," *Makeworlds Forum*—Crisis of Representation and the Politics of Space (2004), <http://www.makeworlds.org/node/69> (accessed January 1, 2013).
27. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press Feminist Series, 2007), p. 134.
28. Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (New York: Verso, 1988), p. 20.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
30. Marcuse, p. 7.
31. Eagleton, p. 331.
32. Chris Kraus, *Where Art Belongs* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), p. 169.
33. Rod Eley, "A History of the Scratch Orchestra 1969-72", in Cardew, p. 29.
34. Frederic Rzewski, "Little Bangs: A Nihilist Theory of Improvisation," *Current Musicology* 67/68 (2002), p. 380.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
37. Wolfgang Rihm, cited in Seth Brodsky, "'Write the Moment': Two Ways of Dealing with Wolfgang Rihm I," *The Musical Times* 145:1888 (2004), p. 57.



## CHAPTER NINE

# ANARCHIST MEDIA AND THE CRISIS OF COMMUNICATIONS

JON BEKKEN

Two related themes animate this chapter. The first is the crisis of communication—or, more precisely, of journalism, and, in particular, of the present economic basis for the gathering and dissemination of information. The dominant system is, of course, largely under capitalist control, oriented toward the needs of the rich and powerful, and so insufficient to meet society's genuine information needs.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, by its very nature journalism serves as a social space in which some social contradictions can be demonstrated, particularly egregious crimes of the powerful exposed, and a certain sense of community developed and maintained. (I should be clear that, in my view, social fragmentation and alienation are one of the primary challenges facing not just the anarchist movement, but humanity's very survival.) However, the ongoing economic crisis, aggravated by decades of plundering of media properties and the speculation those opportunities for plunder invited,<sup>2</sup> upended the economic foundations of American journalism.

The crisis in the contemporary communications system is unprecedented in its severity. The Project for Excellence in Journalism's series of annual reports on *The State of the News Media* document a long-term decline in readership rates for newspapers, far fewer reporters and other editorial workers employed across media industries, and an increasingly strained economic model for most media.<sup>3</sup> There are now nearly four times as many public relations flacks as journalists employed in the United States, and the ratio is exploding.<sup>4</sup> Every year sees more daily newspapers cut back or cease publication altogether. Magazines and weekly newspapers are also in deep crisis. Despite an ever-increasing array of ever-more-specialized channels, radio and television remain heavily reliant on regurgitated programming, transnational media products that circle the globe in search of audiences, corporate- and government-sponsored materials de-

signed to peddle an ideology or product, and talking heads spewing “conventional wisdom” that is as often as not demonstrably false.<sup>5</sup>

This is perhaps the inevitable result of a communications system organized around profits and reliant upon advertising for the bulk of its revenue. In the United States, at least, advertising has long made up the lion’s share of media revenue. In newspapers, the relative importance of news and advertising was made explicit in the lingo of the trade—editors filling a news hole that varied day by day not in relation to the day’s news, but rather in proportion to the amount of advertising pages to be printed. Audiences that advertisers find less attractive must either pay their own way or go unserved. Thus, free glossy magazines are delivered to bankers and corporate executives even as entire working-class cities are stripped of their informational infrastructure. Cable networks, daily newspapers, and other specialized information services compete to provide the latest financial news to the exploiting class, while labor news (news relevant to the lives of the vast majority) is relegated to public-access television and the alternative press.

Breaking into this commercialized information order is not a simple matter. A century ago, workers in the United States supported a wide variety of newspapers and magazines, largely rooted in immigrant communities.<sup>6</sup> But while the capitalist media barons did not hesitate to deploy gunmen and other coercive measures to ensure their continued dominance,<sup>7</sup> the very nature of advertising supported media was probably their most effective weapon. Most newspapers and magazines (and of course all broadcast media) cost significantly more to produce and distribute than is brought in from their audiences; the difference has long been made up by advertising revenue. The six-year life of the *Chicago Daily Socialist* is instructive in this regard. Always a marginal operation, the paper was able to raise the funds to sustain publication through picnics, dances, and donations so long as its circulation was 20,000 to 30,000 copies daily. However, when readership exploded to more than 300,000 in May 2012 (primarily as a result of a lock-out of pressmen and newsboys by the major English-language publishers), the newspaper soon went bankrupt. While advertisers stuck with newspapers that were reaching a mere fraction of the *Daily Socialist*’s readership, the paper’s losses multiplied with every new reader and it was forced to abandon publication in December 2012, even as it remained one of Chicago’s leading-circulation dailies.<sup>8</sup>

Make no mistake: the American media’s reliance on advertising for its financial base had serious consequences. It promoted an elite-centered journalism which largely ignored the lives and struggles of the vast majority of the population. It focused on chronicling the activities of those in

power, rather than challenging them.<sup>9</sup> It resulted in the squandering of social resources on editorial content designed to provide a congenial environment for the advertising. It was a major force driving the consolidation of media outlets, further limiting the spaces in which dissident voices might be heard. Not to mention the social and ecological consequences of the culture of consumption that is advertising's lifeblood. In no way do I mean to suggest that the American journalism landscape of, say, the 1970s was a golden age to which we might aspire to return.

Nonetheless, year after year of sharply declining advertising revenues has led to retrenchment and closures of our actually existing information sources. The number of reporters covering government agencies has been slashed, leaving officials free of even routine scrutiny. Investigative teams have been abolished or cut back. And the survivors of this industrial carnage are expected to produce copies not only for their traditional media outlets, but to supply tweets and blog posts in their copious spare time. The result is that in an era of unprecedented means for communications, our supply of information is actually contracting. There is less information available on many vital subjects, in particular, information about public life—the news, as former *New York Times* reporter Alex Jones puts it, that “feeds democracy.”<sup>10</sup>

This brings me to my second thread: the decline of the public sphere. The conception of the public sphere is, of course, taken from Habermas, who saw a powerful force for democratization in the simultaneous emergence of printed publications that chronicled the activities of government and filled their pages with the text of proclamations, essays, speeches, and the other raw material of public debate; of a new social class that had the means to access this information; of and spaces for people to come together to debate and make sense of it. These relatively autonomous (compared to the peasantry or to those directly dependent upon court patronage) artisans and merchants came to constitute themselves as a public (or, more accurately, as publics), who formed collective understandings of the institutions which governed them and increasingly insisted upon the right to have their needs and desires taken into account.<sup>11</sup>

This was a conception of society in which citizens imagined that they had rights, and by acting as if those rights existed brought them into being. Media played a key role in how the public was able to influence politics and society, both providing the regular and reliable flow of information on public affairs that was the necessary precondition for the articulation of a public opinion, and the means through which publics could come into consciousness of their shared concerns and project those concerns into the public arena.<sup>12</sup> In essence, this is a theory of informed rational discourse

and an actively engaged citizenry—in many ways akin to Bookchin's sense of the municipality as a sphere in which the people could meet, debate, and through their deliberations govern.

This public sphere was of course never genuinely open or democratic, despite its aspirations and universal claims, but it was not a conception of society that naturally tended toward hegemony. Rather, in a society characterized by active publics, our rulers are continually forced to intervene to re-establish and maintain their dominance.

Public life is the traditional subject of the news, and thus the health of the news media and the public sphere are inextricably intertwined. Habermas argued decades ago that capitalist media were in the process of refeudalizing the public sphere, removing information and debates from the public arena to private venues under the control of social elites. Perhaps in part as a consequence of this, public participation in a wide range of institutions has declined in recent decades, and sociologist Robert Putnam suggests that people are increasingly isolated from communal structures as evidenced by long-term declines in participation in unions, fraternal associations, Parent-Teacher Associations, voting, and other mechanisms for public debate and mobilization.<sup>13</sup>

It is far from clear that a true public sphere—a politics based on notions of an informed public actively monitoring government and other social actors—is possible given massive and growing discrepancies in access to information and to the channels of communication. In a context of inequality and of information gathering and dissemination systems targeted not to social needs but to corporate interests, democratic communication or democratic politics must necessarily be attenuated. Too many of us have had the experience of being forced into *faux* participation rituals, designed to legitimate decisions that have already been taken, rather than to afford true means for communal decision-making and action.<sup>14</sup> In any event, the public sphere is everywhere in retreat, displaced not by a more genuinely democratic practice but rather by autocracy.

Some have pointed to the Internet as a means for reinvigorating both the practice of news gathering and dissemination, and the realm for public debate. However, although the Internet does make it possible for anyone to create an online radio feed or blog at modest cost, such projects often suffer from a lack of specific and timely information, editorial standards and coherence, and, at least as important, a public. In the old days of print and broadcast, there was a certain materiality to our media that created at least the possibility of the general public encountering it. You can post anything online, but reaching an audience that does not already know to look for it (even leaving aside questions of net neutrality, paid search results, throt-

ting of the Internet feeds by the service providers, and the like) is a very different matter.

So what does this have to do with anarchist media?

Despite a long history of anarchist media, including daily newspapers in Argentina, Spain and the United States published between 1881 and 1936 (and countless weeklies around the world), there are today no widely circulated anarchist periodicals in North America. There are a few occasionally issued magazines (but only a few), including my own *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review*. There are local newspapers in Philadelphia and San Francisco (and no doubt elsewhere), and newsletters and online sites in other cities. However, the number and reach of anarchist publications have declined substantially in my more than 30 years in the movement.

Successful political movements have always relied upon their own media to help develop movement ideas, support movement cohesion, and reach out to broader publics. Newspapers such as the *Chicagoer Arbeiter-Zeitung* played a key role in building a mass anarchist movement in the 1880s (it continued publication until 1924, though in 1910 it switched affiliation to the Socialist Party), navigating the challenges of maintaining accountability to the broader movement while providing a voice to disparate currents in the movement. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was a daily newspaper reaching tens of thousands of workers. It was owned by the German-speaking workers' movement—by mutual aid associations, union locals, singing societies, and the like; largely written by movement activists (there was a paid editorial staff of three people); and accountable to the movement through regular assemblies where the editors and business manager reported on their activity and stood for re-election.<sup>15</sup> The newspaper supported the movement in its columns, which were filled largely by its readers, and with its offices and printing press. *Arbeiter-Zeitung* editors were a fixture at radical gatherings, serving as speakers and organizers and also as interfaces between the German radical workers' movement and the larger community.

This was hardly unique. There were scores of anarchist papers (mostly weekly or monthly) issued across the United States in the dozens of languages spoken by U.S. workers at the time. And, of course, the anarchist press was international in scope (and many papers circulated internationally as well). The Spanish CNT's *Solidaridad Obrera*, for example, was converted into a daily newspaper in March 1916:

In an organization with only one paid official, the editorial offices of *Solidaridad Obrera* served as a focal point for activists and members, the only place where they could be sure to find a leading figure in the organization at any time of the day. Furthermore, it enabled the diffusion of

propaganda on a day-to-day basis, and obviated the reliance on the Republican press to publish union announcements and communiqués.<sup>16</sup>

The local CNT federation sponsored the newspaper and appointed a committee to oversee it.

Such institutional structures were the norm, not the exception. The movement saw its media as vital, both for maintaining the flow of information and debate within the community of activists and for reaching out to broader publics. As a result, much effort went into not only ensuring that these media were adequately supported, but also into holding them and their editors accountable. With a handful of exceptions, anarchist media were movement media, not individual mouthpieces; they prefigured the anarchist commitments to autonomy and accountability, to freedom and solidarity.

In France, the weekly *Le Monde Libertaire* includes several pages of news and analysis of current events. The Anarchist Federation's radio station in Paris offers extensive cultural and political programming. Ordinary workers, in the normal course of their lives, are likely to come across these media. Such an outwardly focused communications practice both invites and requires more attention to thinking through our strategic approach and focus. It challenges us to consider how we engage with social struggles and debates, still as individuals, to be sure, but also as part of a movement with larger aspirations. It implicitly invites us to bring our daily practices into dialogue with our social vision.

Today, the North American anarchist movement largely relies on the Internet and social media to meet its communication needs, but do we believe that these are truly capable of nurturing and sustaining a collective movement and reaching outside the ranks of the already engaged? Ideas and movements take shape only through dialogue and action; it is in the process of communicating with and interacting with others—with those who in our presented attenuated public life have never felt empowered to consider what sort of world they would like to inhabit—that we come to realize our own capacity, and to give life to our dreams.

## Notes

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## CHAPTER TEN

### COPYRIGHTS MUST BE AMENDED

BRETT DÍAZ

Despite claims to the contrary, copyright law does not protect artists in the music industry. Two examples present how this is the case. Multi-billion dollar corporations are often at fault in copyright lawsuits that the musicians and artists cannot afford. In these instances, those exploiting the artistic creation of others are at an even greater advantage, since copyrights law states that the artist is responsible for discovering instances of stolen work. This means the lawsuit never happens; most artists cannot afford the expenses associated with a lawsuit, and they receive no payment and no credit. Artists need more protection than an invisible shield, especially those whose very art forms assume copyright laws to be obsolete, as in the case of musicians creating live sample-based music. The plateau the genre has presently reached exemplifies why copyrights must end, or at least be amended.

A proper understanding of this issue requires familiarity with the “amen break,” which is a sample taken from a drum solo section of the song “Amen Brother,” recorded by The Winstons in 1969. The drum loop has been used in countless songs since then. Nate Harrison tells an important fact in this story: that the “Amen Brother” song is a near copy of a Curtis Mayfield song, yet nothing has been done about that. It was a violation of copyright in 1969 and again, curiously, in the 1990s when Zero-G, a company that sells sample CD kits, made illegal use of the Amen loop.

Musical sampling as an art form has grown due to changes in technology and the evolution of culture. Art in many forms is not promoted in school any longer. A generation of copy-and-paste artists is the result, and many of us enjoy their creations. Although some samplers simply copy others, many spend considerable time editing and programming sample-based songs—more time, in fact, than was spent on the original source material that is sampled. What samplers do is mix sounds and find out what notes will work well on top of the music they sample. Some of them

use their own instruments to play along with clips of funk recordings from the past.

Copyrights extinguish the sustainability of this kind of creativity because it draws upon so much common material which the law *technically* makes unavailable unless the sampling artist can pay exorbitant licensing fees. Humans need to express themselves and feel connected. It has been argued that ideas do not come from the artist, but from somewhere else. The creative process is built upon exponentially through history. The work of one master is observed and enjoyed. Later, another creator stands on the shoulders of that master and can make a new work out of something old.<sup>1</sup> This is the nature of sampling—it happens in music, fine art, and literature. Writers call it “intertextuality.” This argument comes down to the notion that creators cannot own and appropriate the particular forms in which particular sounds are reproduced. It is argued that sounds float about in space and come into the proximity of the artist, who then uses them to express something that can be shared with others.<sup>2</sup> Hence it cannot and should not be owned.

But artists must be able to live and support themselves financially, right? Copyrights have served their purpose insofar as artists can be compensated for the time they spent creating their art. However, the legal framework is restricting creativity. As it has become very clear that people like creative expression, I would suggest that a tax for art is the best alternative to copyrights. The tax would fund a Creative Arts Factory in which people can take others’ songs and make new ones, if they are so inclined. If a company wants to use someone else’s art to make money, they can. Companies would pay a tax to have the right to use it.

There are different solutions based on the circumstances, and in the current political climate, an artistic creation tax would likely be voted down. However, another opportunity presents itself due to advances in technology and the power of the Internet: everybody in the world could have an electronic copy for free if they liked. The Internet allows for the transference of text, visual art, and sound, so that the cost of distribution is not an issue. In the past, an entire industry was necessary to produce compact discs, tape cassettes, their covers and cases. Now the public can copy music themselves.

In response, the music industry has enacted a private copy levy. Of interest is the Canadian Private Copying Collective that gives citizens the right to make copies of their friends’ music for their own personal use while still compensating the artist. The way it works is that citizens pay a levy proportionate to the amount of copying. For instance, 29 cents are added to the cost of each blank CD, and a 25 dollar levy is added to the

cost of mp3 players over 15 GB. For every conceivable copying medium, they have set a levy, which helps keep artists doing what they enjoy.<sup>3</sup>

The most common-sense approach to encouraging artists to sample from compositions and recordings is to amend copyright law. This can be achieved by proposing a compulsory licensing scheme based on the length and substantiality of the fragment sampled, and charging a fixed fee to the sampling artist. Minimal uses of samples would be exempt from payment. Scholars have suggested this approach, but it has not found its way into the law.<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately, there are several alternatives to traditional copyrights. One is the Creative Commons model, created by Lawrence Lessig, whose vision was to allow content-creators to license their works in ways that are “open” rather than restrictive.<sup>5</sup> For instance, “ccMixter is a community music site featuring remixes licensed under Creative Commons where you can listen to, sample, mash-up, or interact with music in whatever way you want.”<sup>6</sup> Another alternative is the Copyleft model that allows artists to license their works and guarantees they remain freely editable and distributable by anyone who wants to use any part of them.<sup>7</sup> The comparable situation in scholarly literature is the Open Access model, defined as “digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions.”<sup>8</sup>

There are also many artists who do not concern themselves with copyright. They tour and gain funds from performances where they receive a portion of the ticket sales or audience donations, or from selling merchandise such as recordings of their un-copyrighted music, t-shirts, stickers, pins, books, and zines. An alternative solution in my own case has been learning to play a traditional instrument, the accordion. My approach is to learn a bit of a song I like, memorize the notes and chords used in the song, and play them in a new order, all while retaining the mood of the original composition.

Ultimately, copyright law has been shown to squelch creativity while not protecting artists, as it claims to do. Amendments must be made to encourage creativity while thoroughly and more expediently protecting artists and their work.

## Notes

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# FROM POTSDHERDS TO SMARTPHONES: ANARCHISM, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND THE MATERIAL WORLD

JAMES BIRMINGHAM

This chapter engages multiple fronts: it addresses the current relationship between archaeology and anarchism, details the misuse of archaeology by primitivism, examines anarchist responses to the question of technology and material culture, and finally proposes three “tracks” that archaeologists may take up to engage with anarchism.

### **Out with the Old, in with the New**

While the possibilities of the relationship between anthropology and anarchism have been addressed to an exciting degree,<sup>1</sup> the benefits of a relationship between anarchism and archaeology have been mostly overlooked. This section hopes to illuminate some of those benefits and expose some of the problematic discourses within anarchism that claim archaeology as their roots. I start with discussing anarcho-primitivism (or Anti-Civilization Anarchism) and its use of archaeology. For the purposes of this chapter, I will simply refer to this branch as primitivism and would like to note that I am not conflating all the thought commonly denoted by the term “Green Anarchism” with this category. Some of the basic tenets of primitivism resemble Marx’s ideas on the role of technology: in the earliest times, there is a sort of primitive communism; specialization leads to slavery and technological innovation leads to feudalism. There are two major departures in Primitivist thought from Marx’s stages of materialist history: (a) through the work of John Zerzan, many Primitivists now believe that language, symbolic thought such as mathematics and art, and the concept of time are developments that limit human freedom and lead to alienation; and (b), that rather than a transition into communism from capi-

talism, there will be or should be (depending on who you ask) a collapse of civilization (and capitalism with it) that will hopefully lead to a return to “wildness” free from the slavery and alienation of civilization.

Contemporary primitivism begins to form as a “political ideology” in the 1970s. The catalyst is *Fifth Estate*, a journal based in Detroit—the ideas and argument forms from strains of Marxist thought in which the nature of technology itself lies at the core of what is alienating and oppressive about capital—this leads to a rejection of the proletariat as a possible revolutionary actor. The thinkers typically cited for this conception of technology as the problem are Jacques Ellul and Jacques Camatte. Ellul was a Christian anarchist who viewed modern technology as the seminal threat to human freedom and Christian faith. Camatte is of the opinion that capital has become so totalitarian in nature that class struggle is impossible; instead there can only be a struggle between humanity and capital itself, but because the logic of capital has infected us all the only possible choice for freedom is to “leave the world” and live closer to nature, and raise our children in a way as to not sully their naturally sane spirit. By the 90s, much primitivist thought began to coalesce around John Zerzan, who positions himself against both civilization and “the Left.” Zerzan takes the radical anti-tech position to its extremes arguing that everything from plant domestication, music, writing, math, art, and language are forms or sources of alienation. All forms of symbolic representation, anything other than pure, direct, unmediated experience are shackles on human freedom—and these shackles can only be broken through the destruction of civilization in its entirety and a return to a time before we lost our “wildness.”<sup>3</sup>

I will now provide some examples of what I see as misuses, by primitivist thinkers, of archaeological and anthropological (both biological anthropology and cultural anthropology) ideas. The most pervasive and obvious uses of archaeology within primitivist discourse are the claims that hierarchy did not exist until the rise of agriculture. The often heard slogan is, “We were all anarchists up until 10,000 years ago.” And to be fair, perhaps in some ways this is true, if one conceives of an anarchy as simply the absence of the State; however, while the absence of a state may make a society an anarchy, it does not make it anarchist in the sense of having or promoting the values and beliefs of the political philosophy called Anarchism. Another common claim is that before civilization, war and organized violence were absent and humans were more connected with nature and left little negative impact on the environment. The anthropologist Harold Barclay notes that it is as if primitivists have read archaeological and ethnographic texts with special romantic glasses.<sup>4</sup> In both the archaeo-

logical and ethnographic records it is certainly true that certain societies are seemingly more pacifistic and ecologically sound than our own, but this is in no case universal. It seems that primitivism glosses over or ignores the evidence that does not lend itself to their position—certain works by Marshall Sahlins, Stanley Diamond, Richard Lee, and Jared Diamond, for example, will be mentioned repeatedly, but the innumerable accounts, both archaeological and ethnographic, that contain accounts of vicious raids, murder, patriarchy, and general gender inequality (matrilineal societies run by males—not fathers, but mothers' brothers), or that describe hunter-gatherers as ecological nightmare and classless hunter-gatherers that practiced slavery, are usually ignored in favor of more romantic imagery. This happens despite the fact that for every example of a seemingly as-good-as-it-gets egalitarian pastoral or foraging society, there usually exists a counter-example of a group using virtually the same subsistence strategy with very different results in the social sphere. The evidence just does not support the technological base creating the superstructure of a society; it is far more complex than that sort of reduction.

Biological anthropology also gets its share of misuse. In Zerzan's version of human evolution, despite the temporal and anatomical distinctions between *Homo sapiens*, *Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus*, Neanderthals and the like, all these species were possessed of the mental and physical capacities of *Homo sapiens* and, furthermore, lived in primal bliss for more than two million years. In fact, he claims that these ancestors were in many ways more intelligent than modern human beings, having been enlightened through their wild hunter-gatherer lifestyle; they thus wisely steered clear of symbolic representation and technology, choosing nature over culture. In Zerzan's view, it is with the emergence of symbolic culture in the Upper Paleolithic that the alienation of civilization begins. He points to the absence of evidence for symbolic culture before this point to claim that speech, art, and the like did not exist prior to this period. Absence of evidence for something is not evidence against it. Whether *Homo erectus* used their hyoid bones to facilitate speech is not a question we can currently answer.

There is no unifying agreement within primitivism on how the mechanisms leading to the collapse of civilization should come about. Most do not actively wish for a great global catastrophe like nuclear war, but instead hope for a gradual process of negative population growth. Some take a more aggressive stance and view humankind as a virus which needs to be largely or entirely eradicated. Several thinkers on the left, both anarchist and non-anarchist, have pointed out that, due to the carrying capacity of the planet, the human population would have to be decreased by at least

99 percent in order for the remaining population to be able to successfully employ a hunter-gatherer subsistence strategy. Some primitivists deny the severity of the numbers while others maintain that a reduction in numbers of that magnitude is either desirable or a necessary “sacrifice” for the good of the planet and humanity’s chance at real freedom. Nearly all primitivists will denounce the classic anarchist strategy of “building a new society in the shell of the old” as outmoded Leftism, arguing instead that only the complete destruction of all existing structures and institutions, followed by a return to our instinctual “wildness,” could possibly bring about real liberation. That said, in practice many of the self-proclaimed primitivists I have known are ardent anarchist activists working with everything from Food Not Bombs to IndyMedia. Given the ideas of primitivism one may expect that someone with these beliefs would either be living like a survivalist in the deep woods or relocating to remote islands and attempting to revive stone-age technologies. Confronted with what is seemingly a contradiction, I agree with David Graeber’s analysis that it is hard to avoid asking the same question Evans-Pritchard asked about Zande Witchcraft: “how can otherwise reasonable people claim to believe this sort of thing?”<sup>5</sup>

Anarchism in general, of both the classical and contemporary varieties, is not without the need for an anthropological intervention. The works of Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Goldman, for example, tend to treat humanity as a pure entity that is sullied by government, technology, and the like. This notion of an essential humanity needs to be removed from anarchist theory as it is limiting and contradictory to what we know about humanity through the work of anthropology. What archaeology and anthropology offers anarchism is the gift of possibility—it shows that humanity is amorphous and adaptable—and that a new world indeed can be built in the shell of the old, as it has been so many times before. We should not be struggling to reclaim what we lost as we are capable of so much more than that.

## Technology and Stuff

Anarchists and anarchism often tend towards extreme positions, which is no different when it concerns the question of technology. There are the obvious primitivist discourses that reject technology by claiming that it disconnects us from some essential freedom, while at the same time putting technology on a “pedestal of condemnation” by making its adoption the pivotal force that causes the birth of exploitative hierarchies and virtually all of our woes. In a manner equally extreme there are trans-and post-

humanist tendencies that often place technology in an almost messianic framework: according to this thinking, technology will set the worker free and create networks that allow freedoms never possible before. Both the primitivist and transhumanist tendencies, in a sort of vulgar Marxist way, give technology a primary role in humanity's struggle for liberation with a telos that will inevitably be fulfilled. Political theory that relies on a telos is, however, lazy politics. However, more traditional anarchism (or, really, leftism in general) is usually not any better when it comes to the question of "stuff"<sup>6</sup> either. There is a general attitude common throughout the left that "stuff" is an evil thing that should be avoided when possible, the problematic products of capitalism that we should shun if we can. Stuff is certainly ubiquitous and problematic, but any concerns we have about it will not be addressed if we have an attitude towards stuff that simply tries to oppose it—as though the more we think of stuff as alien, the more sacrosanct and pure we become. The idea that stuff somehow drains away our humanity, as we dissolve into a sticky mess of plastic and other commodities, is really an attempt to retain a simplistic view of pure and prior unsullied humanity.<sup>7</sup> This is a damaging myth that pervades more than just primitivist texts—an assumption that suggests to us that because "traditional," so-called egalitarian societies did not have much stuff they were necessarily less materialistic. However, as we know, some of the most sophisticated relationships to things may be found among peoples such as Australian aboriginals or North West Coast Native Americans.<sup>8</sup> The model of the noble, non-materialistic savage is politically useless, because all it creates is an assumption of lost purity.

Often in anti-corporate activism the corporation being challenged and the objects they produce are conflated, thus causing negative feelings about the objects themselves rather than (or in addition to) the method of their production. As I type this on my iMac, I recognize the various problematic issues with Apple, the business, while still appreciating the utility of the tool. We, as anarchists, need to use and embrace our imaginations as many of us already enjoy the various conveniences and objects afforded us through global capitalism and high technology. The problem with computer product X is not so much the object as such, but the fact that it is produced in virtual slave-labor conditions with rare-earth metals that were mined in Africa with no regard to the ecological impact of their mining or the leeching of wealth from the people of the land. Hence, it is not the idea of the object that should be targeted, but it is up to us to imagine ways that these marvels can be produced in a manner suited to our ethics both socially and ecologically.

Good anthropology has the potential to drag the problematic universalist discourses that thrive in radical leftist circles into the particular and thus into a realm where practice has a possibility to make some change. Neoliberalism is close to universal, but there are regional neoliberalisms. Coca-Cola and McDonald's are everywhere, but they mean different things in different localities. The gift is based on an obligation to return the gift, but this works differently within the Chinese Guanxi system than with the Maori Hau.<sup>9</sup> The world is a complicated place and only through understanding and confronting these complexities can any prefigurative politics be successful. Anthropology and archaeology certainly have the potential to help anarchism mature from a discourse of absolutes and universalities to one of particularities, strategies, and context.

### **Three Tracks Towards an Anarchist Archaeology: Potsherds, Paving Stones, and Puppets**

#### **Potsherds**

The material record of societies in the distant past can inform an anarchist model for societies we would like to create now and in the future. Too often more mainstream left anarchism, in its critiques of primitivism, tends to throw the baby out with the bath water, so to speak: the societies of the distant past (as do recent or contemporary so-called egalitarian and “traditional” societies often cited by primitivists) potentially have a lot to teach us. We need to seriously engage the nice and nasty bits of the so called egalitarian societies of the past and present; and we need to seriously engage with the pre-capitalist economics and understand the exploitative structures of these other modes of subsistence, lest in our resistance to capitalism, we fall into traps we could have otherwise avoided. Anarchists should begin analyzing and examining the political, social, and economic structures of past societies in order to inform current anarchist theory and practice regarding the organization of an anarchist society. The archaeological record provides solid evidence that other worlds are possible—we only need to start exploring these “other worlds” in the past and tease out what we think works and does not work for our visions of an anarchist society in the here and now.

## Paving Stones

This track is a call to examine the relatively recent past—the realm of historical archaeology. Archaeology has often done a decent job of illuminating political collective actions of the past; the strategies of disenfranchised peoples from various economic and political situations have been documented; events like the strikes in Ludlow and resistance in African-slave communities have been covered. However, a lot more work in these areas needs to be done, where an anarchist perspective would be fruitful in working through these topics.

There have been numerous communes and other deliberate “utopian” communities that an anarchist archaeologist might study to gain some insight into what did and did not work for them in order to inform future anarchist societies. And, of course, there are also the “big” events in anarchist history—The Paris Commune, The Kronstadt Rebellion, The Spanish Revolution, May 1968, etc. I will focus on the example of the Spanish Civil War in this section as one possibility for the work of future anarchist archaeologists. There may still be archaeological records for the distribution of grain and other goods in the remains of the sites of anarchist collectives, or there may be evidence on which areas were alcohol-free, etc. These are interesting fields that I think offer a lot of potential to anarchist history and should be explored.

However, I think the real battle—a battle of ideological nature—is in the field of how the Spanish Revolution is remembered and the weapon for that battle is public archaeology. The public archaeology currently underway in Spain does an admirable job of bringing the history of the struggle against Fascism into the public realm, but like much of the representations and accounts of the Spanish Civil War (both popular and academic) they tend to focus on, and reduce the conflict into, Left vs. Right; Democracy vs. Fascism; Good vs. Evil. In this chapter, I propose an approach toward a “public archaeology of everyday life” to highlight and bring the everyday, domestic, economic, etc., histories of the conflict into public discourse.

In her book on *Historical Archaeology: Why the Past Matters*, Barbara Little does an exemplary job at framing the concerns and methods of public historical archaeology. Her chapter dealing with the “painful past”<sup>10</sup> is particularly apropos to the topic of this section. Engagement with the horrors of Francoism and the massacres of the Spanish Civil War is, in my opinion, the chief responsibility of a public archaeology of the Spanish Civil War. González-Ruibal<sup>11</sup> discusses contemporary archaeological projects pertaining to the Spanish Civil War; and these projects certainly engage with the public and bring history out of the realm of obli-

on, even if the Spanish people often seem reluctant to excavate conflicting memories. However, while telling the tales of the struggle against the horrors of fascism is without a doubt immensely important, I propose a project that could be conducted simultaneously, one that focuses on the possibility of alternatives, the revolution of the everyday, and the power to both explain and emancipate. In his *The Archaeology of Collective Action*, Dean Saitta<sup>12</sup> outlines a set of concerns and methodologies that would be the basis of my proposed project. Rather than focusing on mass graves and battlefields, I want to examine the everyday life of the anarchists in the war and look at how their everyday practices served as a way to resist both the Liberalism and Fascism that surrounded them.

In early 1977, an amnesty law was signed that effectively granted impunity to the violators of human rights under Franco's rule. This came to be known as the "pact of oblivion."<sup>13</sup> Despite this pact and the general reluctance to confront the all too recent horrors of the past; books, movies, television documentaries, and public events dealing with the Spanish Civil War (from both the Left and Right perspective) have continued to wage the ideological battles of the war. The Spanish conflict is fought again as a war of words.<sup>14</sup> As the craft of archaeology is often a distinctive contributor to public discourse and debate<sup>15</sup> in this "war of words" surrounding the Spanish Civil War, it is also a distinctive weapon. It is through archaeology that we can illuminate the daily lives of the Spanish people outside the battlefields, and it is specifically through the examination of the domestic realm that we will find the material culture that can shed light on the ideological resistance and differences of the various factions on both the Left and the Right. This includes the possibility to emancipate the history of the Spanish Civil War from two meta-narratives—one centering on the dualistic notion of "Democracy vs. Fascism," the other on the configuration of the Spanish Civil War as "just a prelude to WWII."

## Puppets

Finally, there is the material culture of anarchism in the here and now. The power of the puppet in a protest; the plusses and problems with the black mask; the prevalence of skinny black jeans; the garb and accessories of punk rock; the piles of stickers, pins, badges, zines, books, and other objects we find ourselves surrounded by; the bicycle and the skateboard; the makeshift furniture and dumpstered dinners. I feel that through the lens of material culture studies, anarchist archaeologists can fruitfully sift through these varied assemblages and make solid contributions to anarchist theory and practice. I am currently working on a project looking at the athurmata

of anarchism as a political milieu. Classically, *athurmata* refers to the countless trinkets Phoenicians carried on their ships—many of the objects from faraway “exotic” locales. Through the lens of the work of Greg Urban,<sup>16</sup> I am doing ethnographic and archaeological work mapping out the objects anarchists tend to collect and trade—and how these objects connect people. I am looking to explain how material culture both creates and maintains social relationships between these anarchists and how these objects construct and reinforce their political identities. I am carrying out this project through interviews, cataloging, photography and video. I hope it will serve as an example of how archaeology and material culture studies can inform contemporary anarchist scholarship.

## Conclusion

I hope this chapter serves as a brief but inspiring rallying cry to anarchists who happen to be engaged with archaeology. My writing was purposefully programmatic—I think these are the paths this emerging field should follow—though there are likely many more tracks that would prove fruitful. Archaeology is a field of knowledge and methodology that is full of political potential; it is a field that can and should inform anarchist theory and practice.

## Notes

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
15. Saitta, p. 112.
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**PART FOUR**

**RELIGION, ETHICS, AND SPIRITUALITY**



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### LUISA CAPETILLO, ANARCHIST AND SPIRITUALIST: A SYNTHESIS OF THE IRRECONCILABLE

CARMEN A. ROMEU TORO

*Education is the foundation of human happiness. Educate under the canopy of truth: break the veil of ignorance, showing the true light of progress, free of dogmas and rites. Practice fraternity, to strengthen the ties that should unite humanity from one border to another without distinction of race or beliefs. Ignorance is the cause of the greatest crimes and injustices.*

—Luisa Capetillo, *Ensayos Libertarios*, 1907.

In 1907, Luisa Capetillo—a Puerto Rican labor leader and a pioneer of feminism, anarchism, and spiritualism—published her first book. “Dedicated to the workers of both sexes,” it discussed both anarchism and spiritualism, themes that arise often in her writings, and expressed her concern for poverty and other problems she saw in her surroundings. Throughout her life, Luisa defended the oppressed and practiced social action to remedy the ills of humanity. Who was this eloquent woman who swept through streets, towns, cities, and countries expressing her ideas and principles in a fashion ardent and intrepid for her time and even our own?

#### **Luisa’s Life**

Luisa Capetillo was born in the thriving city of Arecibo in October 1879. She received a good education which was maintained and promoted throughout her life by reading. She was the mother of three children: from her relationship with Manuel Ledesma were born Manuela (1897) and Gregorio (1899); and from another relationship was born her third son, Luis (1911).

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Luisa worked in the textile industry. In 1906, she began working as a reader (*lectora*) in tobacco factories. This work was also done at different times of her life in Puerto Rico and the United States (New York, Tampa), helping her to survive economically and to increase her extensive cultural sophistication. She also met important Puerto Rican labor leaders of the era, such as Santiago Iglesias Pantín.

Luisa Contributed to labor publications throughout her life, making her first public appearance as a labor leader during the Crusade of the Ideal (*Cruzada del Ideal*). In 1907 she published her first book, *Ensayos Libertarios*.

Luisa defended women's rights and universal suffrage, although her greatest concern was the organization of women in trade unions. Several of her writings go beyond the issue of defending women and their rights, especially her book *Mi Opinión* (1911). She also edited a magazine called *La Mujer*, of which no copy has been preserved.

In 1915, she was arrested in Havana for wearing trousers in public. She defended herself by calling on authorities to show evidence of the written law prohibiting that act; after not finding any, the authorities released her. This incident makes her the first Puerto Rican woman to wear pants in public. On her return to the island, she worked as a labor leader in agricultural strikes in Patillas, Vieques, and Ceiba. In 1916 she published her last book, *Influencias de las Ideas Modernas*.

She died in Río Piedras, Puerto Rico on April 10, 1922. On reporting her death, the newspaper *Unión Obrera* (April 15, 1922) read: "Her burial was poor, as they are regularly for leading apostles of great causes of humanity."

## Discussion of Ideas

For the purposes of this chapter, spiritualism may be understood as a philosophical doctrine founded by the French educator Hipólite Denizard Rivail, known as Allan Kardec (1804-1869). His ideas are known to arrive in Puerto Rico around 1871, the year in which the first *espiritista* meeting in Mayaguez is documented. Spiritualism is defined as a philosophy of life based on the prior existence and survival of the spirit, reincarnation, and universal evolution united with moral principles.

Luisa Capetillo, who considered herself a *rationalist spiritualist*, lived at a crucial moment of labor activism among spiritualists, many of whom published and formed groups during this time. She mentions in her writ-

ings the ideas of the French astronomer and spiritualist Camille Flammarion (1842-1925), a friend and follower of Allan Kardec.

Luisa did not understand how spiritualism could be used as a philosophical shield for people to hide behind and avoid the fight against injustice. She believed that spiritualism and anarchism were identical in terms of the end they pursued. In practice, however, they differed in their understanding of poverty and the actions required to remedy it. Luisa could not accept any justification for deprivation and injustice; it was necessary to fight against it. Why, she argued, should spiritualists not agree with the Anarchists in this aspect? At the same time, Luisa was aware in this context of the contradictory class interests which separated these two groups. It is very likely that there were *espiritistas* that questioned her anarchist positions, which she sought to defend in her writing. In her first book, *Ensayos libertarios*, she states:

Companions, brothers in ideas, Socialists, Anarchists and Spiritualists: many ignorant people claim that I intend to combine anarchism and spiritualism. Perhaps Anarchists have no soul or will have made it another way? Many so-called *espiritistas*, as well as many of the real Anarchists, are, despite their differences, fair, equitable, humane women; loyal friends and colleagues; courageous and determined defenders of universal brotherhood.

In the midst of what appears to be a debate among the Puerto Rican spiritualists, Luisa presented arguments in support of what was for her the true source of virtue and fairness: anarchism. In all likelihood spiritualists with other class interests and ideologies were at odds with her and with the actions and ideas of the anarchists. Capetillo responded to them by pointing out the inconsistency of their ideas. For her, the anarchists provided an example of the sincerity and social commitment she admired while, on the other hand, the spiritualists appeared indifferent to those in need. Luisa criticizes their explanations for poverty and proposed remedies in her 1907 book, *Mi opinión*:

Now, if the Spiritualists are willing to tell workers not to advocate for their rights, or not to ask for salary increases, capitulating to the exploitation to which they are subject, not declaring strikes, [and] patiently suffering hunger and nakedness, because in another existence they did the same, I will say, on behalf of spiritualism, enough! Without ceasing to be a spiritualist, I say to the workers that it is a crime when they are left to die of hunger and nakedness, or forced to kill for bread...

The use of the phrase “without ceasing to be a spiritualist” represents Luisa’s effort to be faithful to her philosophical principles even as she questioned the views advanced by the movement. In her essay “*Recuerdos de la Federación Libre de Trabajadores—Impresiones de un Viaje: Julio 1909*,” she describes a tour that included meetings with workers of Aguadilla, as well as other visits and assemblies. It was printed in the workers’ newspaper *Union Obrera* in Mayagüez following her visit to *El Centro de Amor y Caridad* in San Germán. Luisa writes: “... After I praised Anarchy at length and spoke of its egalitarian synthesis, they ended by telling me that I was materialistic... materialistic, I? Why? I do not know. I just know that I am human, highly human.”

On the other hand, Luisa Capetillo always spoke up against the Catholic Church and its representatives. She believed that the rituals and dogmas were obsolete in their power over humanity. In addition, she understood and proclaimed with absolute clarity that dogmas and religious rites were not part of the spiritualist teachings. As she says in *Mi Opinión*:

I don’t understand Spiritualism in terms of mysticism or other ideas properly called religious fanaticism. I do not accept Spiritualism in order to comply with criminal laws or an authoritarian regime. I do not understand Spiritualism in terms of the accepted customs, dogmas and rites known as religious institutions.

Capetillo also defended anarchism as a return to the natural and healthy state of human beings. Her ideas became intertwined with anarchism, spiritualism, workers’ struggles, and an egalitarian vision for women. Such philosophical currents of the time were integrated into her thought and action, forming a modern and dynamic body of ideas. “They are more elevated ideas, more in accordance with the progress of the century,” Luisa told her daughter in a letter from 1911.

## Pioneer of Feminism

Luisa Capetillo’s writings echo ideas that form the basis for understanding the differences between the sexes. Luisa says in her book *Mi Opinión*:

Let me explain why men have always claimed to have rights over women... This has been allowed by social construction and has been tolerated by us women owing to the alleged weakness of which we have always been accused.

In the same text she also defends the participation of women in society:

...Today silence and retirement are not acceptable in women, because today women in Europe aim to share public posts and to govern and manage people, without losing their feminine personality or their duties as mothers and wives.

Luisa also advocated free love, emphasizing the right of women to be loved and happy in relationships without restrictions or hypocrisy. She understood that women were enslaved by conventional morality. These ideas, consonant with spiritualism and anarchism, formed the basis of Luisa's vision of universal fraternity, free thought, and justice. Within spiritualism, the spirit does not have sex (a sexual identity), thus equality exists in the spiritual world. The practice of spiritualism, therefore, offered a space for women's action and participation.

One of the most memorable incidents in Luisa's life was her arrest in Cuba for wearing pants in public. Among anarchists, it was common to perform public acts of disclosure and affirmation, which were seen as necessary to advance desired changes. Capetillo explains her "anarchist clothing" in *Mi Opinion*:

The custom of [women] wearing pants conforms perfectly to the era of women's progress.... It is communist and anarchist progress. We found societies and have meetings without the blessing of the clergy or the permission of the judge or mayor. .... Women are admirably adapted to this sociological development. We hope to clearly defend our full emancipation and all our duties and rights.

## Her Contemporaries

According to Norma Valle Ferrer, Luisa's biographer, anarchism was the common thread in her life and work, being a voracious reader and a person of vast culture. As an anarcho-syndicalist Luisa traveled throughout the island of Puerto Rico, as well as to the United States (New York and Tampa, Florida), Cuba, and the Dominican Republic working as reader (*lectora*) and trade union organizer.

Many people active in the working class and Anarchist movements believed and practiced spiritualism. Anarchist books and magazines circulated which helped to keep track of ideas and events from around the world. Luisa collaborated on the book *Voces Libertarias*, published in Argentina in 1919, "A call to women by their comrades to think, agitate, and act together with men in the struggle for human emancipation." Here, Luisa was published along with authors such as Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxembour, and Emma Goldman. She also collaborated with other Spanish-

speaking women—e.g., the Spanish Belén de Sárraga and Teresa Claramunt and the Argentinians Salvadora Medina Onrubia and Juana Rouco Buela, among others—who like Luisa embraced anarchist and spiritualist ideas while also advocating equality for women.

## Defense of Utopia

Luisa Capetillo dreamed of the creation of “*una escuela agrícola*,” a school-farm to propagate her ideas about anarchism, feminism, and hygiene, among others. In May 1919, Luisa corresponded with the labor leader Santiago Iglesias Pantín regarding her proposal. In his reply, he noted that it was “a magnificent idea,” but claimed a lack of resources as an insurmountable obstacle to its realization.

Other anarchist women of this time founded school-farms in various parts of the world. One example was the *Colonia Ciudad Jaime*, oriented toward the spiritualist philosophy, which was founded in Santiago del Estero, Argentina in 1934 by Joaquín Trincado, founder and director of the *Escuela Magnético Espiritual de la Comuna Universal (EMECU)*, which still exists.

In her last book, published in 1916, Luisa includes plays and stories in addition to letters, writings, and poems. In the play “*Influencias de las Ideas Modernas*,” published in 1916, she includes a character named Angelina, who is an *espiritista*. Angelina is a young girl, a daughter of the owner of the hacienda, who has come to understand through education that the claims of the workers are righteous and fervently supports the general strike. In her speech, she explains to the leader of the workers, with whom she falls in love and whom she marries without a legal contract, why she is right:

Very natural: I will explain to you how it all started. I was studying Spiritualism, since my brother had died when I was still a very young girl, and I felt a desire to read about the afterlife. In addition, I understood the plurality of inhabited worlds and accepted various existences. All this made me a revolutionary, because this vision explained that all men are brothers, that they have no right to disturb others, nor impose their ideas on others, nor enslave others... that luxury in the face of misery was a crime. So, in addition to demonstrating the grandeur of the universe, [Spiritualism] made me a humanitarian...

This character embodies the values and ideals to which Luisa Capetillo aspired: freedom, brotherhood, love, and justice for all. The rich would

give to the workers what belonged to them to use in community and all would love each other without distinctions of sex, class, or age.



# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## CHRISTIANITY AND ANARCHISM

ABNER J. ROLDÁN  
TRANSLATED BY NATALIA FORTY

Christianity and anarchism appear to have nothing in common; one might even consider them polar opposites. I contend, however, that the majority of negative reactions to combining these two perspectives are based on ignorance and prejudice. First, people often assume that anarchism is a philosophy for young, rebellious adolescents and seeks only chaos and disorder. They also assume that the most prominent characteristic of Christianity is and has always been the domination and oppression of believers. These are unfortunate stereotypes that oversimplify two philosophies whose shared objective is the welfare of all. As Alexander Berkman writes, “Jesus desired for all men to be brothers [and] that they should live in peace and goodwill. It is the church that sustains inequality and war.” Furthermore, Berkman adds, it is impossible to live a Christian life under the conditions of capitalism. Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (Matthew 6:24, New International Version).

Among some believers, it is held that the primitive church was, in form and action, anarchistic. This is a daring assertion in light of the centuries-old claim that the earliest Christians were submissive and obedient to the State. However, there are multiple examples which prove that these same Christians were persecuted, incarcerated, and executed by the State. Furthermore, the way they organized, voluntarily associated with and provided aid to one another, demonstrates a decidedly anarchist(ic) attitude.

In the Book of Acts, for example, the communities described are decentralized. Decisions in these communities were made by consensus, and they sold their properties and possessions and divided their wealth according to the necessity of each individual. This sharply contrasts with popular forms of modern Christianity, which exalt the rich and shun the poor. Jesus

said, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. However, you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the least, and the one who rules like the one who serves” (Luke 22:25-26, New International Version).

The first Christians preached and lived the highest mandate within Christianity: “Treat each other as you would like to be treated.” It is for this reason that they were met with persecution and opposition by the State. According to Berkman, it is impossible for any government to adhere to the Golden Rule. Under capitalism and government, “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle” than to live a Christian life (Matthew 19:24). The earliest Christian communities were centered on love and kindness towards others.

Some Christian anarchists allege that the first Christians were persecuted because they refused to venerate human idols such as the Emperor. Others claim that the Romans executed Jesus to appease the Jews and ingratiate themselves towards the Roman government during the Passover celebration, which commemorates the Jews’ liberation from bondage in Egypt.

Liberation Theology, which developed in Latin America in 1950s, is a theological perspective that believes that Christian salvation cannot be achieved without economic, political, and social liberation, as these are visible signs of the dignity of man. Many of the ideas of liberation theology have been influenced by anarchist philosophy. Like anarchism, liberation theology is concerned with liberty, justice, and love and denounces social, political, and economic structures based on domination. Both perspectives emphasize action and look with hope to a future in which human beings are liberated from servitude. For many Christian anarchists, liberation theology has helped the Christian faith integrate spirituality and political thought.

It must be recognized that although there have been Christian groups with anarchist tendencies—for example, the Quakers, the Anabaptists, the Catholic Workers, and proponents of liberation theology—these are not and have not been accepted widely within the church and are even considered heretics by some. As a result, many Christian anarchists find themselves caught between two mutually antagonistic camps—the Christians, many of whom consider them rebels and heretics, and the anarchists, many of whom consider them ignorant or superstitious. This framework presents a Jesus who, as a kind of anarchist, doesn’t fit with the Christianity of the modern church. It goes without saying, however, that the duty of every self-professed Christian, whether anarchist or not, is to fight for the king-

dom of heaven here on earth, as Jesus said, and not to accommodate the system. If all followed the teachings of Jesus, all would recognize the evil of the state.

I conclude with the words of Gerald Brennan, who wrote that “the Bible, and especially the New Testament, contains enough dynamite to blow up all the existing social systems in Europe... only by force of habit and through the power of beautiful and rhythmical words have we ceased to notice it.”



# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## ANARCHISM AND SPIRITUALISM IN PUERTO RICO

DANIEL POMMERS  
TRANSLATED BY KARLA SANTOS

If a consensus exists between the many doctrines which compete for our assent, it is the fact that we are now able to recognize the possibility of humanity's extermination. As much progress as mankind allegedly made in the midst of the catastrophes of the past century, we find ourselves contemplating the end of our species as a biological, no less than an existential, reality. With us is dying the myth of eternal democracy, which pretended to anchor us and give us hope in our everyday lives.

So drastic have the challenges of the last decades been that we now find ourselves in the nadir of economic precarity. We are oblivious citizens, living with a phantasmal sense of well-being which positions us in a reality marked by chaos and chance. We have permitted agreements to be made in our name behind closed doors and, above all, we have convinced ourselves that it is possible to create a good life in the midst of a society controlled by corporations and states.

The compromises that each individual makes with regard to their own humanity, whether in public or in private, may be understood in terms of ideas that enable them to cope with the suffering that is inflicted upon them by other individuals and groups. These ideas are reflected in various philosophies—e.g., spiritualism, libertarian socialism, and anarchism, among others—which seek to explain material as well as extrasensory phenomena. Beginning in 1857, Allan Kardec (Hippolyte Leon Denizard Rivail) developed a spiritualist philosophy that relies on a reinterpretation of fundamental spiritual notions ignored by conventional religions. As a result, spiritualism very quickly came into conflict with the Catholic and Protestant churches, both of which denied the possibility of communicating with the dead from the plane of the living. Instead, the dead are

permanently consigned to heaven or hell, to salvation or punishment, in accordance with their beliefs and actions when they were alive. In Christianity, there are no more opportunities for the dead; they no longer exist among the living. Spiritualism, in contrast, affirms that the dead are reincarnated through many lives, wherein lies the secret of salvation. There is no room for the Christian concept of hell in spiritualism. God is not viewed as a judge who hands down verdicts and sentences. He does not condemn mankind to burn eternally in the company of demonic legions.

The first spiritualist societies in Puerto Rico developed from the efforts of a diverse array of actors, most of whom enjoyed a certain degree of social prestige and notoriety during their era. The spiritualists stimulated philosophical and scientific debate regarding the incarnate world and its concerns, facing the opposition of clerical personalities, regional leaders (mainly, mayors), and other people who sought to promote and maintain their own self-interest and power. These “public servants” sought to suppress the growing popularity of spiritualism and found efficient ways to manipulate popular opinion, focusing especially on the neighborhoods where spiritualist societies had the most impact.

In order to reign in the proliferation of religious communities that were outside ecclesiastical, legislative, and governmental scope (which only privileged a select few), the powers that be implemented a number of restrictive laws and, in some cases, resorted to direct maneuvers like bribery. Municipal funds related to the health and development of Puerto Rican society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were openly manipulated to suppress dissent.

Later, political conditions changed in a way that allowed for the acceptance of alternative beliefs. Laws were instituted which safeguarded the free association of citizens, which in turn allowed individuals like Eugenio Astol of the Unionist Party to found spiritualist societies such as *Luz de la Razón* (The Light of Reason, later called *Centro Unión*—Union Central). In 1889, *Centro Unión* participated in the International Spiritualist Congress, which was held in Paris.

The Spiritualist movement continued to face conservative adversity. For example, after founding a hospital known as *Caridad y Consuelo* (Charity and Consolation), the followers of *Centro Unión* came into conflict with the mayor of Mayagüez, who campaigned to erect another municipal hospital. His intentions were clear; he wanted to counteract the popularity of the *Caridad y Consuelo* project. Regrettably, the mayor’s strategy caused *Centro Unión* to close the hospital doors. Although it was reopened within a year, the hospital was shut down within five years.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### ETHICS AS AN ANARCHO-SOCIAL PRACTICE

REYNALDO PADILLA-TERUEL

TRANSLATED BY JOSÉ I. LOPEZ MARTINEZ

When morality is reflected in rules or laws that serve the interests of the powers that be (the State, the Church, the global market, etc.), the ordinarily ambiguous notion of being “morally upright” becomes clear and precise; it is a matter of issuing and obeying commands. However, the concept of law by itself can never provide a legitimate foundation for morality, since it displaces the choices made by the autonomous *moral self* in favor of arbitrary directives disguised as universal judgments about proper and improper behavior. Any law or rule that tries to become *universal* in this sense is destined to vanish due to its false structure.

Laws foster the illusion of “order” while pretending to be vital to life within a particular community, thereby overshadowing and destroying the *will* of the moral self to act. There is a popular notion that, in the absence of laws, life as we know it would devolve into complete disorder and chaos. Such beliefs can be interpreted in many ways, but the disorder in question is often understood in *moral* or *ethical*, rather than strictly social, terms. This presupposes that the threat of punishment and the promise of reward are the only factors that determine whether a person does “good” or “bad.” This, in turn, suggests that there is a need for a “primal structure” (like a nation-state) to regulate social order by imposing and enforcing rigid ethical-moral systems that eradicate individual moral autonomy. Oftentimes, we internalize these systems and use them to define and regulate our relations with others; we respond to the social rules imposed by the state more than our own social instincts and our nature as beings destined to co-exist socially. As a result, we suffer a loss of individuality and feel ourselves to lack a “voice in the choir of the masses.” Nonetheless, the social individual, already situated in this framework of laws and rules that she has followed like a zombie or obeyed like a soldier, begins to reflect on her individuality and to feel doubts about the collective (political group, community, etc.) to which she belongs, and with which she has expressed

sympathy. At this point, she develops an awareness of the restrictions imposed on her by a law that is inexorably *other*, finding herself hopelessly lost in abstractions that she cannot comprehend but only obey. Because of *our* imposed occidental tradition and socialization through external sources of morality, even an individual sense of morality can become dogmatic if it is defined in purely *egoistic* terms, or if it is constituted by a conscious rejection of conventional moral standards (i.e., “immoralism”).

We could say that immoralism of this sort is rather a feeling of resentment born from the individual’s inability to control her own individual process of socialization. In order to achieve a sense of freedom, the individual tries to break away from moral concepts, principles, etc. that are interpreted as oppressive in the socialization process. (For example, she might conclude that the concepts of national identity, patriotism, militarism, etc. are illusions which provide a false sense of collective solidarity.) The problem is that in moving away from these concepts she does not have a clear alternative for creating new relationships with the other, and the socialization process remains broken. By attempting to regain her freedom and individuality, the individual breaks social links and avoids taking an active role within the community in order to satisfy personal interests. All the while, the role of the state in how we live within *its* communal *imaginarium* is never questioned as regards this “immoralistic” rupture.

The state and its hierarchical structure provide a model even for parastatal opposition and apolitical institutions to organize themselves. In order to stop this vicious circle, it is important to prevent socialization within contexts imposed by the state or any other dogmatic ideological consciousness. The need to do so arises from the sedimentation and crystallization of social action before the *apparent* dissolution of nation-state power. This power was slowly seized by the financial sector and the global market, as evidenced by the current financial crisis. After the banks were “rescued” by the United States government, and so on in the Eurozone, this power shift was confirmed and verified. We could also talk about the shift from *citizen* to *consumer* in postmodernity.

Can the organization of social practice be recuperated through ethics of a collective nature, as opposed to ethical principles that represent and, at the same time, *justify* the state? How can the social space be recreated so that social organization within a community becomes more solid? How can we make everyday socialization innovative? In this context, the *reconciliation* of the Self with the Other through socialization free of state intervention becomes essential.

To acknowledge and comprehend the Other in an instance absent the Other’s being recognized by the state is also very important. In fact, it is

necessary for reconciliation with the Other to be an expression, rather than a curtailment, of moral autonomy. To achieve this, it is fundamental to conceive a social ethics that places *us* in a real proximity with the other individual—an *aesthetic social ethics* that recognizes extreme otherness in its essential negativity and unintelligibility.

Technically, the practice of creating and enforcing ethical codes or principles emerges within particular contexts, as when professional codes of ethics are accepted within a particular field of inquiry or endeavor. On the other hand, any ethical practice that arises from collective agreement between individuals or groups is to be considered an action produced by their will, free from arbitrariness or dogmatic oppression, and thus capable of being transformed into uncoerced, horizontal social practices.

Morality is not strictly a theological or theistic concept, but instead is intimately linked to the concept of *tradition*. We could talk about how this or that particular moral concept emerged from within a particular religious or political context, but what about an atheistic or apolitical morality? Should this be considered amoral or unethical by definition? I believe that before mentioning anything related to amorality—or even to “good” or “evil”—we should think about *tradition* as the source of what is to be considered “moral,” “immoral,” or “amoral.” Our interpretations of how the world operates are possible because of tradition, and hence, tradition makes valid criticisms of morality and of tradition itself possible.



## **PART FIVE**

### **PRAXIS AND CONTEMPORARY STRUGGLES**



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### BULLHORNS, BALACLAVAS, AND... NEGOTIATIONS WITH VIVISECTORS? IT'S JUST ANARCHISTS IN NEOLIBERAL DRAG

JENNIFER GRUBBS

The animal liberation movement's use of home demonstrations—protests at the personal residences of targeted individuals—not only threatens animal and eco-industries, but also “queers” various social and political discourses that sustain animal abuse and ecological exploitation. This queering effect refers to the ability to expose, alter, and/or invert taken for granted understandings and practices. For example, the use of public performance *as* direct action calls into question and challenges a slew of accepted truisms: that human animals are more valuable than nonhuman animals; that “doing one’s job” safeguards one from political and/or ethical responsibility; that government and corporate interests are distinct and separate; that legislation is passed for the public good rather than private profit; and, on a different kind of note, that average, everyday people are powerless to change various structures, laws, and customs.

Although home demonstrations and the animal liberation movement remain understudied in anthropological discourses, there is a growing literature on the neoliberal reshaping of global capitalism and the nepotistic overlap between government and corporate entities. The current moment facilitates the decentralization of corporations, ambiguous loci of accountability, and the façade of individual agency.<sup>1</sup> The decentralization of corporations negates accountability by creating an illusive web of interconnected international entities. With the increasing prevalence of lobby front groups and multinational conglomerates, the task of corporate-mapping and identifying a singular target has become increasingly difficult.<sup>2</sup> The following analysis will interrogate the use of home demonstrations as political theatre that relies on playful exaggeration to challenge the decentralization and ambiguous corporate accountability of speciesist capitalism facilitated by neoliberalism. Specifically, the use of home demonstrations

relies *on* a neoliberal logic in order to expose the inherent exploitation and alienation *of* neoliberalism. Activists within the animal-rights movement have challenged the efficacy of home demonstrations and individual targeting, which clearly emulate neoliberal principles such as individual agency, free markets, and the construct of “rationality.” The project began with the question, “Does the reliance on neoliberal rhetoric during home demonstrations *reinscribe* neoliberalism or subvert it?” After attending several home demonstrations affiliated with the animal liberation movement, it became clear something more was going on. Gramsci provided a framework within which to understand how individuals participate in systems of domination, further articulated by Althusser. Luxemburg, however, clarified that although individuals participate in the reproduction of oppressive systems, they are not fools. This analysis extends that sentiment to activists: *they are not fools*, and I emphasize the rhetorical efficacy of performance and the protest *as* spectacle during home demonstrations. The proclamations and chants exaggerate neoliberal principles as a rhetorical strategy to expose the fallacies inherent in neoliberalism.

The following analysis focuses on home demonstrations I attended with the animal liberation collective Defending Animal Rights Today & Tomorrow (DARTT). These demonstrations took place in the affluent neighborhoods of Georgetown and Dupont, located in Northwest Washington, DC. DARTT utilizes the tactic of home demonstrations to name, shame, and blame individuals affiliated with the U.K.-based animal breeding and vivisection company, Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS). DARTT emerged in Washington, D.C. in the early 2000s, and has been linked to the international campaign, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC). The SHAC campaign focuses on secondary and tertiary targeting, which includes not only HLS employees but also customers, shareholders, connected financial institutions, and so on. This model is based on a three-tier approach which includes “...campaigning against customers who provide HLS with an income and profits; suppliers who provide HLS with vital tools to carry out research, and financial links such as shareholders, market makers and banking facilities.”<sup>3</sup>

## Neoliberal Protest

The structure of a home demonstration is based on the neoliberal logic of naming an individual in front of their community, blaming them for their role in corrupt corporate practices, and shaming them for not taking action. The demonstration takes place outside of an individual’s home, challenging the binary of personal and public spheres. The public nature of the

demonstration, despite the very personal rhetoric directed at an individual, reinscribes the neoliberal principles of agency and responsibility. The organizers exaggerate the individual freedom and responsibility of the targets, claiming they have the choice and ability to “fix” the problem by ceasing ties with Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Graeber encourages activists to utilize the political and social imaginary in order to challenge the “neoliberal moment.”<sup>4</sup> Neoliberalism refers to a new form of “neo laissez-faire economics.” As activist and author Jason Del Gandio succinctly states:

[Neoliberalism is] based on the deregulation of free markets and the privatization of wealth. It subordinates government control to the interests of private profit. The government—rather than regulating the market to assure a level playing field—becomes an extension of market activity, the servant of the industries to which it is captive. Neoliberalism provides tax breaks for the rich, reduces spending on social programs and welfare, expands corporate control and eradicates labor rights, environmental protections, drug and food regulations and even national law. The basic purpose is to allow private interests to own and control every aspect of the human, social and natural world.<sup>5</sup>

The elusive web of powerholders is veiled within neoliberalism because of the ambiguity of authority. It is difficult to identify a central site of government that can be held accountable for monitoring “the market,” let alone a singular regulatory body responsible for a single function within the market.<sup>6</sup> The challenge for those hoping to dismantle this oppressive reality relies on deconstructing the illusive web of corporate-State nepotism. The modes of resistance, as such, are challenged to locate and target the *central* site of power. However, the increasingly globalized corporation does not have a singular center of power, and thus imagination is rhetorically necessary to construct a site to demand an end to both neoliberalism and capitalism.<sup>7</sup> The possibilities inherent in imagination allow for creativity and collaboration among non-State actors advancing the critique of neoliberalism. The demonstrations challenge this lack of accountability through the exaggeration of individual agency and responsibility.

The animal industry privatizes and profits from the suffering and murder of nonhuman animals. Challenging this hegemonic cruelty must involve imagining a post-capitalist and post-speciesist reality. Such imagining is facilitated by “disidentification”—i.e., to get people to disidentify with the current conditions and practices of neoliberalism, the animal industry, and speciesism. The use of direct action—conceived here as a form

of political theatre—is one way to facilitate an alternative political imaginary.

The home demonstrations often rely upon the use of “spectacle.” By spectacle, I am referring to the construction of reality through public theater. The performativity of home demonstrations creates a scene—similar to a theatrical play—in which the grim and hidden realities of vivisection are publicly staged for all to see. In other words, HLS’s violence (which is often masked behind corporate walls) is brought to the forefront by the garishness of the publicly performed *spectacle*.

It should be noted that Guy Debord of the Situationist International famously critiques “the spectacle.” In *Society of the Spectacle* (1970), Debord argues that authentic social life has been replaced by mediated representation. We no longer relate as humans, but as commodities that are filtered through the confluence of capitalism, advanced technologies, and mass media. As Debord states, “the tangible world is replaced by a selection of images which exist above it, and which simultaneously impose themselves as the tangible *par excellence*”; the spectacle “is not a collection of images, but a social relationship among people, mediated by images.”<sup>8</sup>

It is not a stretch to apply Debord’s critique to the human-over-animal hierarchy that animal liberationists fight against. How many movies, songs, commercials, billboards, political metaphors, and everyday sayings and practices maintain and perpetuate both the idea and practice of exploiting animals for human use? In this sense, then, many humans relate to nonhuman animals as commodities—as mere representations of actual sentient creatures that have lives and existences of their own.

However, despite Debord’s persuasive critique of mediated society, the spectacle can be appropriated for positive and profound social change. According to social theorist Stephen Duncombe, media technologies are here to stay. Rather than shunning such technologies, activists must learn to critically appropriate those technologies in the service of progressive causes and liberatory practices. Duncombe agrees that the overarching, dehumanizing spectacle—as described by Debord—must be critiqued and overturned. At the same time, he also agrees that there are liberatory elements within the spectacle. Learning to tease out those elements can enable activists to create an *alternative* spectacle—one that teaches people to be reflective, ethical, conscientious, and active creators rather than passive consumers. It is within Duncombe’s framework that animal liberationists employ direct action strategies.<sup>9</sup>

Home demonstrations are an attempt to amplify the problem (animal exploitation) and the motivation (profit) by creating an alternative specta-

cle (one based on truth-telling and the adoption of an ethical relation to nonhuman animals). Demonstrators do this by creating a public performance. The demonstrators use their bullhorns to amplify their message and turn a sidewalk or front lawn into a public theatre. The power of the spectacle lies in its ability to demand attention and render abstract concepts into accessible courses of action. The method is both confrontational and invaluable. As Baudrillard states, "This is our theatre of cruelty, the only one left to us—extraordinary because it unites the most spectacular to the most provocative."<sup>10</sup>

The demonstrators begin their performance by ringing the doorbell or buzzing an apartment complex intercom. "Hi, Joe/Jane [Doe]. We spoke several days ago, but you refused to meet with me in person. I wanted to meet with you and talk about your client, Huntingdon Life Sciences." Once activists confirm that the "target" is home, the performance takes off, usually beginning with a series of chants. "One, two three, four. Open up the cage door! Five, six, seven, eight. Smash the locks and liberate! Nine, ten, eleven, twelve. Joe/Jane can go to hell!" These chants solidify the activists' solidarity and remind onlookers that the demonstration was all about targeting Joe/Jane. In between chants, a few of the organizers might give speeches and/or proclamations that address the target loudly enough for all to hear. For example, "We tried to meet with you, Joe/Jane. We are sure you would not want to be affiliated with the grotesque cruelty that Huntingdon Life Sciences is conducting on your behalf." The demonstrators then make sure to recount the horrific vivisection, the thousands of animals ordered from the breeding facility, and the discredited research that results. It is important during such demonstrations for the activists to appear rational and eager to resolve the issue. The demonstrations are intended to make it all look simple: cease relations with HLS and the campaign against *you* will cease.

This spectacle invites the audience (onlookers and passersby) to witness the exchange as it exposes HLS, challenges the violent archetypal portrayals of animal advocates, and mocks many of the taken for granted truisms of global capitalism (for example, that our lives should be based on profit and/or that "the market" equals freedom). The proclamations ensure that the audience clearly understands how many animals are being exploited through HLS-contracted vivisection. The demonstrators do not break from their theatrical characters during the performance—they playfully engage "the audience" and politely but markedly turn off their bullhorns when a leashed animal is walked past. All of this accentuates the heightened sense of spectacle that is being enacted.

Lastly, the demonstrators consistently use the first name of the person targeted while repeatedly asking the target to come outside and discuss the situation. Those in the “audience” might think that the demonstrators are shortsighted by their faith in such an invitation to talk and discuss. A passerby might stop and say, for instance, “Don’t you guys realize this person can’t do anything about it? S/he works for some larger company that doesn’t care what one person has to say. S/he has the job to pay his bills, and if s/he stands up to company practice then s/he will just be fired.” However, the demonstrators are not so naïve; they know full well that the target is unlikely to come outside and even less likely to change his or her company’s practice of animal exploitation. Instead, this kind of demonstration—as queer a performance rather than a literal political plea—exaggerates the agency of the target and, therefore, highlights powerlessness common to the average person living within capitalism. As an additional queering effect, this demonstration also highlights the passerby’s implicit understanding of this powerlessness. Everyone gets the insight that we are, for the most part, powerless to affect change, but no one calls it out. And that is a significant aspect of this spectacle—to call attention to what we all already know, forcing people to confront the issues and problems of the current system and thereby become more empowered to actually enact social change.

## The Power of Play

As a challenge to the neoliberal moment, Graeber encourages activists to utilize the political and social imaginary.<sup>11</sup> This type of mobilization is predicated on the imagined reality of a post-capitalist and post-neoliberal society facilitated by disidentification. Political theatre taps into this imaginary through the inherent play in exaggerating neoliberal individualism and choice on the streets of Washington, DC. Those in the “audience” are led to believe the demonstrators are shortsighted by their faith in neoliberal *negotiation*. In order to critique this reliance, the audience must disidentify in some way with *neoliberalism*. According to activist and performance theorist Benjamin Shepard, play creates “open spaces where new sets of rules and social relations take shape. *Play* refers to the jest infused with satirical performance that brings joy and lightheartedness to otherwise serious and enraged activism. Here social actors feel compelled to participate in a broader social change drama.”<sup>12</sup> Shepard argues that these types of direct actions serve to empower individuals who are systematically excluded from bureaucratic decision-making processes; rather than passively accepting the laws, rules, and regulations made by detached deci-

sion makers, people *directly participate* in the reconstruction of alternative reality. That reality may not be wholesale or long term, but it is, at the very least, the creation of a new *now* that challenges a targeted grievance. The ability to create and recreate shared realities during a direct action relies on playfulness exemplified by a series of sarcastic and satirical rituals such as collective chants. The spectacle of the protest queers—in other words, it reimagines and rearticulates—the ways in which dissent is performed and understood.

The animal liberation movement is obviously not the first to use play and political theater. Drag performance, as discussed in detail by J. Brian Brown, provides a counterspace for gay men to not only embody but also embrace alternative masculinities.<sup>13</sup> Brown and leading drag-king performer and scholar, Diane Torr, rely on a large literature on drag performance as gender subversion, and conclude that this empowering mode of theatre advances queer politics about identity. The use of political theatre was an important strategy during the 1980's HIV/AIDS advocacy movement. From ACT UP to Circus AMOK, queer activism challenged systems of power with exaggerated mimicry on the public stage of the streets. In effort to queer the anti-war effort, campaigns such as Absurd Response to an Absurd War emerged and relied on the strategic rhetoric of exaggeration. Activists utilized public die-ins and drag races to draw attention to the health disparities and violence disproportionately inflicted on the gay community in New York City. Play, as a political strategy, refers to the playful jest infused with satirical performance that brings lightness to otherwise fiery activism. Drag performance, whether it is a reenactment of Judy Garland's funeral or marking the anniversary of the police violence at Stonewall Inn, manage to mix glitter, fishnet stockings, and holistic political analyses of queer repression. Similarly, bullhorns, posters of maimed animals, and proclamations strategically coincide during home demonstrations to embody a critique to neoliberalism, capitalism, and speciesism.

SHAC's use of play is quite telling in the face of its topic/target—animal abuse and exploitation. Activists utilize the empowering nature of play as an attempt to counter the overwhelming sense of loss of animal lives. Continually thinking about the overwhelming sense of animal cruelty and repeatedly protesting outside of a lobster restaurant or a university laboratory is emotionally exhausting. Constantly reminding oneself of the millions of animals that are killed dominates the work of an animal liberationist. The power structure is so blatantly controlled by animal oppressors that even the most strident campaign can appear minuscule compared to multi-billion dollar agri-vivisection industries. Play is therefore a way to combat these negative emotions—it is a cathartic release and a creative re-

channeling of one's emotional life. Play enables animal activists to laugh even while confronting some of the worst atrocities committed by fellow humans.

While recounting the animal abuses through a megaphone, activists may intersperse a call-and-return chant to lighten the tense atmosphere. For instance, activists in Niagara Falls, Canada gathered outside the home of John Holer, founder of the Marineland amusement park. Holer and Marineland were targeted because the amusement park's animal exhibits are not only exploitive, but also negligent and cruel, keeping animals in unsanitary and unsafe conditions. The demonstration concluded with a remix of Carly Rae Jepsen's dreadful (but catchy) radio hit "Call Me Maybe." The activists' playful remix was directed at the Niagara Regional Police (NRP) who had been present the entire time. One demonstrator shared a video and commented that, "five hours with the NRP. We ended it off with a dance party blasting 'Call Me Maybe' into their cars. Don't call me. *Ever*."<sup>14</sup> The song and dance party was obviously done in jest, which helped create an uplifting and "spectacular" moment for the activists engaged in a long campaign against Marineland.

The creativity and playfulness of such direct action queers the ways in which marginalized peoples can confront systems of power. SHAC activists, for instance, commonly infuse their chants, proclamations, and printed materials with humor and sarcasm. However, this humor and sarcasm are also aggressive, seeking to affect serious social change. As SHAC-7 defendant Josh Harper states:

This was the threat of Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty; we saw through all the social conditioning that tells us that we are too weak to affect change. We went directly to the homes of those in power, challenged them on their golf courses, [and] screamed at them while they vacationed at summer homes. We were the barbarians at the gate, an alliance of the kind of people who did not usually get heard by the mega-rich of the world. Tooth and nail we went after their profits, and along the way refused to divide and fracture over broken windows or graffiti. Everyone was welcome if they would fight, and I smile so big [that] it hurts when I think of the grandmothers, the punks, the students, and all the other unlikely comrades who marched together in defiance of the false hierarchy that tells us to keep separate and leave the rich to their own devices. We didn't stay in our place. In fact, we recognized that our place was wherever the hell we chose, and the world of finance and animal abuse was rocked as a result.<sup>15</sup>

The strategic use of humor, in combination with physical performance, infuses *power* into play. A playful chant, for instance, can help to interrupt

activists' aggressive proclamations and heated interactions with neighbors. That humor then places people at ease, which can actually aid the persuasiveness of the direct action. The fact that any activist can (more or less) spontaneously create and lead a chant at any point during the demonstration also establishes a more open space. In this way, then, the playfulness of chants reflects a wider goal and vision: to create a more inclusive, bottom-up social order in which everyone—both humans *and* animals—are able to live freely and joyously.

### **Shaming as Successful Strategy**

Home demonstrations remain a highly successful tactic as evidenced through the ceased financial relationships with HLS following home demonstration campaigns (Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty 2011). The SHAC website features an “honor roll” of companies that were once affiliated with HLS, but ceased ties following a targeted campaign and negotiation with SHAC. This list features over 300 international corporations, and SHAC claims the financial influence of transforming HLS from, “a public traded company worth \$500 million to a company \$110 million dollars in debt and with NO commercial bank and insurance company anywhere in the world prepared to deal with them.”

### **Conclusion**

Similar modes of subversion, political street theater and drag, utilize voice in combination with physical bodily performance to destabilize Ideology. The proclamations and chants used to create the spectacle of protest during home demonstrations expose the alienation, the powerlessness, the veiled accountability, and overt frustrations felt by those subject to neoliberal capitalism. The demonstration purposefully exaggerates the rhetoric of neoliberalism: rationality, individual agency, free enterprise, market driven capitalism, and individual responsibility. In turn, those observing, participating, and targeted are left counting the ways these portrayals are ludicrous. Thus, the demonstration successfully shapes the frame of reference into a critique of globalization and capitalism that questions all the euphemisms embedded in the current neoliberal moment. The demonstrations successfully create a counterpublic where a minority group of individuals, animal liberation activists, can aggressively challenge speciesist capitalism and neoliberalism.

Drag, according to Butler, moves the “reality” of gender into crisis mode as it blurs the naturalized boundaries artificially created that link

*masculine to men and feminine to women.*<sup>16</sup> This blurring of reality calls into question what constitutes gender and the constructed sources of knowledge about gender, further opening space to challenge the shaky reality of gender as social creation. The exaggerated mimicry performed during home demonstrations, similarly, moves neoliberalism toward a state of crisis by highlighting the construct of agency. Brian Maloney, the targeted individual during one of the home demonstrations, is left feeling helpless and frustrated with his *lack* of agency with AstraZeneca. On-lookers are left counting the ways in which Maloney, and even American Petroleum Institute, are cogs within the vast terrain of globalized capitalism. Neoliberalism *becomes* the joke; it becomes the laughable social construction that holds no salient relationship to the false promises the demonstrators are calling out. It is this strategic re-framing that situates the chants and proclamations delivered during their home demonstrations within a trajectory of effective political theatre. The bullhorn is the stiletto heels and corset; it is anarchist veganism in drag.

## Notes

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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### ANTHROPOCENTRIC TYRANNY

GAZIR SUED

TRANSLATED BY JORELL A. MELÉNDEZ BADILLO

*Anthropocentric Tyranny* is a preliminary outline of an analysis I am developing at the moment. I will refrain from going into detail and limit myself to presenting the topic in a problematic manner from a critical theory perspective—radically critical, or radically political, if you like. I will not deal with animal rights, or at least not with the traditional concept linked to the feeling of human empathy with animal suffering and the compassionate sensibility we all know. In fact, as concerns the topic that is of interest here, it is important that we keep a cautious distance from the humanist discourse in which animal rights are expressed. Even if the animal-rights movement is not fully domesticated, animal rights discourse has certainly been absorbed and co-opted by powerful and virtually impenetrable forces that, in the name of humanity and the science of human health, torture and sacrifice animals daily—a cruel practice which appears perfectly justified only because we ignore the will of power, prestige, and profit that sustains, promotes, and encourages it. However, that is not the topic I wish to address. I am more interested in some psychosocial and economic conditions that make possible the consolidation of authority by huge corporations in the biomedical industry in an almost absolute matter, as well as the near total absence of any popular will that questions the legitimacy of these authorities. It is this topic, perhaps, that anarchist scholars might find the most interesting and relevant.

There is not a more dangerous and harmful species on the earth than ours; none is as cruel and ruthless. Arrogant, selfish, spoiled, and pretentious, it imposes power over itself and the world. At the same time, there are intelligent and sensible people who are capable of recognizing and pursuing the value of life, of coexisting in harmony with the other animal species that share our planet.

## Slaughtering

The ruthless and cruel treatment of animals is legal and institutionalized in Puerto Rico; government agencies support it and incite it; they finance it and execute it. The slaughtering of hundred of rhesus and patas monkeys is proof. These species that form an integral part of Puerto Rican fauna and enrich our biodiversity are facing extinction.

Since the seventies, when the demand for animal test subjects exploded within the U.S. biomedical industry, Puerto Rico became the main supplier for these primates, which are *ideal* as an experimental object because of their physiological and psychosocial similarities with the human species. During this period, owing to the avarice and the administrative incompetence of the authorities in command, many of these monkeys escaped and migrated to the wooded southeastern part of the island.

An extremely thin line separates the economic interests involved in the business of farming primates from the slaughterhouse of science.

Since 2007, the government of Puerto Rico has declared these species “invasive” and “dangerous” and ordered their extermination. \$1.8 million from the public treasury has been spent on this macabre enterprise and on the advice and support of national and federal “experts,” “professionals,” and “scientists.” From the dominant anthropocentric standpoint, the consensus is that the surpluses of non-human primates (which are not profitable for the biomedical industry) were to be sacrificed. The government even issued non-sport hunting permits to the assassins.

Refined with technicalities and rhetorical tricks, the *project* to “control” these species is reduced to the order of using “lethal techniques” to sacrifice them. According to the ex-secretary of the DRNA (Spanish acronym for the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources), “the authorities determined that shooting at them was more humane than administering lethal injection” .22 caliber bullets are used to assassinate captured creatures.

These primates, born here, are victims of the State’s gunmen as well as amateurs who kill for pleasure (sport hunting) and are authorized to do so by law. According to information from the DRNA, from 2008 and 2010 the number of massacred rhesus and patas was 1,432. By the second half of 2011, this number rose to 1,639.

Nonetheless, both species stand out for their formidable predisposition to adapt and coexist socially among human beings. The rhesus and patas are descendants of fugitives who fled their cruel captivity by local and federal biomedical corporations. The ones that inhabit the island nowadays were born here. Like the majority of our native fauna, these species are

descendants of immigrants, as are the cows and horses, dogs and cats. They are neither an “exotic invasive” species nor “a plague that threatens human and wild life.” They do not “affect our quality of life as citizens,” as the neurotic and murderous rhetoric would have us believe.

### **Biomedical Mythology, Ethics, and Science**

Experiments with non-human primates in captivity raise serious ethical questions, primarily about the physical and emotional abuse to which these species are subject, through confinement, harassment, and torture, in “scientific” laboratories. The biomedical industry, its promoters and beneficiaries, conceal this practice systematically and restrict access to information in an almost absolute manner. Citizens are misled and misinformed by corporate propaganda and the indifference and inattention of the media, which allows violence and cruelty to animals in captivity to occur without any opposition.

Those who are in favor of this practice argue that it is morally legitimate to sacrifice the well-being of laboratory animals to the valuable pursuit of biomedical and scientific “advances,” such as treating dangerous illnesses and conditions (e.g., AIDS, hepatitis, or cancer) or handling bioterrorism threats (Ebola, Anthrax, etc.). This premise is speculative and false, lacking any scientific foundation. Since the start of the twentieth century, the biomedical industry has experimented with non-human primates as substitutes or replacements for our own species (because of moral reasons, economic calculations, or legal and political pressures). This mythical belief works by exaggerating the utility of animal experimentation for science and was intensified by the discovery of genetic similarities between humans and non-human primates. The result is a false notion that non-human primate subjects are necessary for the progress of health sciences in the form of preventing, diagnosing, and treating human diseases.

Studies made by geneticist Jarrod Bailey about the appropriateness and utility of experimenting with chimpanzees in biomedical laboratories reveal the illusory character of this belief, demonstrating the relative insignificance of animal experimentation inside the frame of biomedical expectations. Although human beings and chimpanzees share at least 96 percent of their DNA, there is no significant evidence regarding their experimental value or their real contributions to the development of treatments against human diseases.

This analysis acquires more relevance in the case of the rhesus monkeys in Puerto Rico, whose genetic similarity to humans (93 percent) is less than that of the chimpanzee. These differences between species—

which in turn underlies the series of experimental and clinic failures—are systematically ignored and omitted by those who promote rhesus experimentation on the island (especially the *Caribbean Primate Research Center* [CPRC], which is sponsored without conditions by the Campus of Medical Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico).

Whether because of its relative genetic similarities or its physiological resemblance to human beings, the rhesus is presented as a viable test subject by biomedical corporations and the individuals in favor of them. This fiction legitimizes commercial interests, such as the CPRC's, which functions not as science but as corporate propaganda. Given the existence of alternate experimental technologies that are more secure and effective, invasive experimentation on primates is not a scientific necessity and does not conduce to national interests or the well-being of humanity as a whole.

Once biomedical mythology is debunked, all that remains is the cruel and fraudulent business of experimenting with these species in the name of science and humanity. There is no scientific foundation for continuing with the invasive experimentation on primates in captivity, but there are profound ethical reasons to be against it. Miserable corporate interests prevail over the interests of humanity, converting the cruel treatment of animals into profit. And it shall remain that way as long as we continue to consent to it.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

QUEERING (ANIMAL) LIBERATION  
AND (QUEER) VICTIMHOOD:  
THE REAPPROPRIATION  
OF INTERSECTIONALITY AND VIOLENCE

MICHAEL LOADENTHAL

The examination of political rhetoric is instructive in the development of a progressively revolutionary politic aimed at expanding a sphere of liberatory inclusivity outwards. The following chapter explores how the politics of the insurrectionist queer network known as Bash Back! have served to contribute to this expansion via the fields of critical animal studies as well as queer studies. Moreover, this essay will inquire as to how the broader insurrectionary anarchist and queer movements possess anti-speciest tendencies that have relevance for the advancement of radical scholarship seeking to unveil and confront systems of domination and oppression. As a prefigurative site of inquiry, this chapter will examine a communiqué issued by “an anonymous cell of Bash Back!” in response to an incident that occurred at SeaWorld in 2010. From this single event, one can begin an examination of the rhetorical contributions offered by Bash Back! and other queer insurrectionists, asking the question: Does contemporary queer theory provide the tools necessary to deconstruct the anthropocentric understanding of themes such as “aggression,” “retaliation,” and finally, “liberation”? This chapter seeks to inquire: How does queer theory and neo-insurrectionism inform an anti-speciest critique of domination, resistance and liberation?

**The Lives of Captive Orcas**

In February 2010, at SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida, Tilikum, a 12,330-pound bull orca whale, said to be the largest in captivity, attacked and

killed its trainer, forty-year-old Dawn Brancheau. Media accounts, hoping to contextualize Brancheau's relationship with Tilikum, described the two as "close." Images circulated after the attack show, among other poses, Brancheau smiling while standing atop Tilikum—a smile from ear to ear. According to an ABC News report:

The 40-year-old trainer was at ease with the killer whale and had just petted him on the nose. However, in a scene that horrified SeaWorld visitors, Tilikum grabbed her long ponytail when she turned her back, pulled her into the pool and began swinging her around in its mouth.<sup>1</sup>

After pulling the trainer into the water, Tilikum swam from pool to pool with Brancheau's body in his mouth before finally relenting after being lured into a more confined space. In the autopsy, it was revealed that the trainer died of blunt force trauma, sustaining massive damage to the head, ribs, and vertebrae. She was also drowned. Thirteen months later, in March 2011, Tilikum returned to SeaWorld and was made to perform again, often alongside his grandson and daughter. Nineteen years earlier, on February 21, 1991, the very same whale was involved in the death of another trainer, this time at SeaLand of the Pacific, in Victoria, British Columbia. Tilikum was also found to be "involved," but not "responsible," for a third death in 1999 when a trespasser to SeaWorld was found dead atop Tilikum's back when workers arrived in the morning to open the park.

Tilikum's life in captivity began when he was taken (along with two other whales) from the waters off of Iceland's east coast in 1983 and brought to Western Canada to replace another orca that had recently died. At SeaLand Victoria, his first site of captivity, Tilikum shared a small pool with two other orcas and would regularly scar himself within the tiny space. After fathering his first calf in captivity, Tilikum was prevented from ever interacting with his offspring. Tilikum is the parent or grandparent of sixteen offspring in captivity. While being "trained" at SeaLand, Tilikum and other whales were the victims of "food deprivation training," in which the animals were denied food when they refused to respond to trainers' commands. During the park's business hours, the whales were housed in a pen next to the ocean, separated from the vast waters by a net. At night, fearing the animals' release (through their own actions or that of an activist), the orcas were moved to holding pens measuring only 6 meters (20 feet) deep and 8 meters (26 feet) in diameter.<sup>2</sup> The tanks provided barely enough room for the large whales to turn around. Often times the orcas displayed resistance to being moved to these small pens and were sanctioned with the denial of up to 100 percent of their daily food allotment.<sup>3</sup>

Because Tilikum entered SeaLand's possession later than other captive orcas, he existed at the bottom of an inter-species social hierarchy and was regularly bitten and scraped by the two whales with whom he was housed—Haida II (the mother of Tilikum's first calf) and Nootka IV. Without a separate pool to live in, Tilikum was forced to absorb the attacks from the higher ranking, "veteran" orcas. After the death of the first trainer in 1991, Tilikum was moved to Florida, placed in a larger tank, and no longer trained with food deprivation. Apparently, these changes were not sufficient to prevent additional acts of violence. Tilikum's existence at SeaWorld Orlando consisted of periods of isolation punctuated by his performance in the "Believe" show. Show organizers would train Tilikum to use his large tail to splash water, dousing the first fifteen rows of onlookers.

Mainstream animal welfare organizations, including the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and the World Society for the Protection of Animals, have fought against the keeping of orcas, citing recurrent health problems relating to captive living. For example, 60 to 90 percent of captive male orcas experience dorsal fin collapse, and Tilikum is no exception, with his dorsal fin completely collapsed to his left side. This condition is thought to be caused by chemical additives in the water, dietary changes, lowered blood pressure from decreased activity, and increased temperatures due to constant sun exposure during performances.<sup>4</sup> The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society argues that such collapse is due to the whales swimming repeatedly in small circles in tanks offering inadequate space.<sup>5</sup> Critics of keeping captive whales and other sea animals have received increasing attention following the release of the 2009 film *The Cove*, wherein Ric O'Barry, the former trainer responsible for the dolphin actors used in the 1960s TV series "Flipper," began to publicly campaign against his former field of work. Since leaving the show in the early 1970s, O'Barry has been involved in the clandestine liberation of several captive dolphins.<sup>6</sup>

## Killer Whales & Insurrectionist Queers

The conditions that predicated Tilikum's 2010 attack are well documented and can only be read as a warning sign towards more retaliatory attacks in the future. Orcas like Tilikum are forced to perform in shows such as "Believe"<sup>7</sup> which is put on three times a day for thirty minutes to an audience of more than 5,000, as part of SeaWorld Park's \$1.2 billion per annum business<sup>8</sup> profiting from the exploitation of whales, dolphins and other non-human animals. The "Believe" show, which in the past featured

Tilikum, was discontinued in April 2011,<sup>9</sup> and replaced by “One Ocean,” a show meant to “connect with thrilling sea creatures and realize we are all part of one world, one ocean...you realize that we all have the power to cause a change in this planet we share”.<sup>10</sup> SeaWorld’s head trainer stated to news media that the “One Ocean” show is “designed to create the interconnectedness with the whales without having to be in the water,” and to “emphasize the individual personalities of each of the roughly two-dozen killer whales in SeaWorld’s corporate collection.”<sup>11</sup>

Tilikum’s 2010 attack may not be atypical. In the wild, there have been at least three incidents, none fatal, in which orcas have attacked humans. This stands in strong contrast to the record of orcas in captivity, which have been involved in at least forty attacks, including four fatalities. Thus, it appears as if captive living increases an orca’s likelihood of carrying out a lethal attack. This may be a coincidence prompted by proximity, or a product of mistreatment in captivity. It also appears as if an orca involved in an attack is more likely to be involved in a second attack, as at least nine orcas are considered to be “repeat offenders,” involving themselves in multiple attacks on humans. This observation has not escaped the notice of media, as one article cavalierly states, “wild killer whales are not generally seen as a threat to humans; however, captive killer whales have been known to attack their handlers at theme parks.”<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, Tilikum’s deadly streak was common knowledge among SeaWorld staff, as they would comment that, “[Tilikum] was considered so dangerous that new workers were routinely warned that anyone who entered his pool would ‘come out a corpse.’”<sup>13</sup>

Because of captive orcas’ propensity to lash out, the new “One Ocean” show was designed with the safety of the *trainers* in mind. According to SeaWorld, the “One Ocean” trainers work “exclusively from the stage,” and maneuvers such as the “rocket hop,” where a trainer is thrown through the air, propelled via the orca’s nose, have been replaced with “multiple orcas preforming in unison...amid giant fountains.”<sup>14</sup> Following Tilikum’s 2010 attack, SeaWorld trainers began “re-training” the orcas, disciplining them to “swim around the perimeter of their pools while ignoring progressively greater distractions.”<sup>15</sup> According to SeaWorld, this training technique, known as “water desensitization training,” will be used to discipline all the orcas in their “corporate collection,” though it has been announced that Tilikum will be excluded from this process.

The media accounts following the 2010 killing of Brancheau predictably avoided discussions of domestication, speciesism, and domination of non-human animals for entertainment dollars. The images released show the human trainer and the orca performer (enslaved worker) as buddies,

similar to the way in which one would poise with a companion animal living in their home. The recipient of these harmonious images is led to feel that what occurred that February afternoon was a rare accident with an *unpredictable animal*. We are led to attribute the orca's actions to fear or confusion, not anger and frustration. In discussions and news reports, the observer is reminded of the joy the orca received from the trainer's efforts prior to the attack—the intention being to frame the human-animal relationship as one of symbiotic cooperation, not master-slave dominance. The subjugated animal, like a pet, is expected to find solace in its trainer, to “churn out unconditional love... [to be an] affectional slave”<sup>16</sup> as the result of being fed and kept. Some would argue that it is *possible* for mutually beneficial, human-animal relationships, where “purpose[less] and functionless” play is used to enrich both parties' lives.<sup>17</sup> Despite this *possibility*, such approaching-egalitarian, multispecies play does not occur when one party is held and bred in captivity, and forced to perform for the entertainment of its oppressors.

What followed next in the media was a rhetorical exercise to properly reframe Tilikum's actions—to explain them in terms of accidental unpredictability, not domination provoking a rebellion. It is clear to anti-speciesists that Tilikum was not at play while imprisoned at SeaWorld. He was not living as a companion animal. He was the imprisoned subject, the victim of systematized violence inherent in incarceration and coerced performance. This bodily reality intersects with contemporary, anarchist, insurrectionist, queer theory, to be explored in the pages to follow. This analysis begins with the assertion that both non-human animals and queers experience non-abstracted, *actualized violence* as the product of their subjugation. To quote one such anarcho-(neo-)insurrectionist queer publication:

Queers experience, directly with our bodies, the violence and domination of this world. Class, Race, Gender, Sexuality, Ability; while often these interrelated and overlapping categories of oppression are lost to abstraction, queers are forced to physically understand each.<sup>18</sup>

Here we can begin to see the intersectionality of a political framework that would reject violent domination based on species, as well as the force used to discipline the bodies of so-called sexual deviants and gender outliers.

In the days following Tilikum's 2010 attack, on March 4, a communiqué was authored and distributed by the queer anarcho-insurrectionist network known as Bash Back! (BB!). The communiqué, titled “*Bash Back!ers In Support of Autonomous Animal Action Call for Trans-Species Solidarity With Tilikum*,”<sup>19</sup> satirically declared “solidarity with all trainer

killers,” and announced that “the nonhuman political prisoners at Sea World Orlando have organized the first chapter of Splash Back!, an insurrectionary tendency of sea animals dedicated to destroying all forms of oppression.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the anonymous authors called for “solidarity actions with Tilikum across the country to support animal autonomy and resistance.”

## **Fags, Trannies, Dykes & Networks of Affiliated Queers**

The anonymous authors of the Splash Back communiqué are activists self-identifying under the BB! moniker. BB! has emerged in North America as a militant force that is serving to redefine political praxis while offering an emergent identity politics challenging the dismissive tendencies located in reformist, and often assimilationist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) movements embodied in organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign (HRC)<sup>21</sup>. Throughout this discussion, it is important to understand that BB! is a single networked web within the larger insurrectionary, and queer insurrectionary, movements, and within this specific web, the Splash Back! Communiqué is but a single piece of text. Whenever possible, this analysis has sought to make generalizable observations, and thus the discussion should be thought of as a discussion of insurrectionary contributions to critical animal and queer theory, not simply the contributions of a single piece of political text.

BB! should be understood as a *tendency*—a form of thought and action—positioned within the larger insurrectionary milieu, not as a static group or movement. In its short time in self-identified existence (2007-2011), BB! became an extremely active presence within North American insurrectionary action. Through transparent Internet-based discussion boards, semi-regular regional gatherings, and the publishing of political communiqués, BB! has developed a rhetoric that seeks to expand the sphere of inclusivity beyond a gay/straight, male/female binary, offering an intersectional, transformative model of revolutionary struggle, informed not only by queer theory, gender studies, and feminist studies, but also by anti-authoritarian insurrectionist movements challenging state power. The expanded model offered by BB! seeks to advance a fight for *queer liberation*, not “gay rights.” The autonomous cells affiliated with BB! have spoken critically of the LGBT movement’s campaign to repeal “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell,” as well as campaigns to advance gay marriage. BB! activists have claimed that queer persons should not seek state recognition through such legalistic reforms, and instead should work to challenge the heter-

onormativity of State-sanctioned marriage, and the connections between military policy, structural violence, and the regimenting of queer bodies.

The BB! network of projects, chapters, and cells<sup>22</sup> was founded in Chicago in 2007 and is closely linked to the anarchist milieu of North America. The moniker has been used in acts of property destruction targeting assimilationist LGBT groups (e.g., HRC), Pridefest events, as well as other institutions seen to be contributing to the oppression of queers. BB! has also been involved in protests confronting white supremacists, the Republican National Convention, police brutality, and violence against transfolk. Through acts of political violence and the production of a revolutionary discourse, BB! has served to redefine struggle, asserting that the liberation of queers is an act of anti-assimilationist “social war,” positioned as an opposition to not only the State, but the larger discourse of binaries, sexes, genders, and the Foucauldian disciplining of bodies.

Like other horizontalist movements of the left, the BB! network has no centralized, hierarchical direction, and no way to officiate actions and statements written in its name. Despite this obstacle, a concise description can be taken from the “About me” section of the Denver and Philadelphia cells’ webpages which both describe BB! as:

A network of radical, anti-authoritarian queer projects within the United States. Bash Back! seeks to critique the ideology of mainstream GLBTQ movement, which we see as dedicated to obtaining straight privilege by assimilation into the dominant institutions of a heteronormative society. Bash Back! chapters employ direct action to confront capitalism and all interrelated forms of oppression, especially focusing on exposing the gay mainstream and the dangers of gay assimilationism and homonormativity. Bash Back! is noticeably influenced by the anarchist movement and other radical queer groups, such as ACT UP and Gay Shame. We are inspired by events like the Stonewall Riots and the White Night Riots.<sup>23</sup>

The Chicago cell similarly describes itself as:

...an anti-assimilation, sex-positive, anti-racist, radical group of queers, transfolk, and anarcho-feministas dedicated to eradicating heteronormativity, subverting binary gender norms, capitalism, and attacking all intersecting oppressions including but not limited to white supremacy, patriarchy, classism, ableism, fatphobia, transphobia, lookism....<sup>24</sup>

The Fort Wayne, Indiana group describes itself as:

A group of radical queers, transfolk and feminists dedicated to building strong communities and militant opposition to heterosexism and transphobia and all forms of oppression, including white supremacy, patriar-

chy, fascism, ageism, classism, capitalism, fatphobia, femmephobia, ableism, poverty, and borders.<sup>25</sup>

Note that in the preceding descriptions listing systems of oppression, the cells make no mention of the human-animal species binary. While the cells consistently cite their opposition to “white supremacy, patriarchy [and]... classism,”<sup>26</sup> these brief manifestos lack explicit acknowledgement of a politics opposing speciesism.

Despite the nuanced ways in which divergent cells describe themselves, all BB! cells must adhere to the network’s four Points of Unity, which state:

- 1.) Fight for liberation. Nothing more, nothing less. State recognition in the form of oppressive institutions such as marriage and militarism are not steps toward liberation but rather towards heteronormative assimilation.
- 2.) A rejection of Capitalism, Imperialism, and all forms of State power.
- 3.) Actively oppose oppression both in and out of the “movement.” White Supremacy, Patriarchy, Heterosexism, Ableism, Racism, Homophobia, Sexism, Speciesism, Transphobia, Ageism, Adulthood, Xenophobia and all oppressive behavior is not to be tolerated.
- 4.) Respect a diversity of tactics in the struggle for liberation. Do not solely condemn an action on the grounds that the State deems it to be illegal.<sup>27</sup>

Within this discussion, it is important to note that within such network-wide Points of Unity, speciesism *is* mentioned as an oppression to be “actively opposed,” following the 2008 revisions made by BB! Memphis. Thus while the larger network must by design accept this position, an anti-speciest politic is not mentioned in the individual cell manifestos surveyed. More importantly than static, network-wide guidelines adopted by cells, are the individual communiqués signed with the BB! name and circulated after a cell has claimed an action. Between its founding in 2007 and its declared “death” in January 2011, the BB! moniker was used to sign numerous communiqués elaborating on the network’s ideology, as well as to claim movement acts. The Splash Back communiqué, authored in March 2010, is one example.

This communiqué, despite being linguistically playful and a clearly demarcated piece of satire, offers important theoretical contributions to both queer studies and critical animal studies. The Splash Back communiqué serves as a rare nexus between the emergent politics of contemporary anti-authoritarian and insurrectionary anarchism, animal liberation, and anti-assimilationist queerness. It is at this crossroad that BB! chooses to

engage the reader, to challenge the audience in stating that *all oppressions* are deserving of resistance. This includes the oppression of heteronormativity and heterosexism confronted by queer theory, as well as the oppression of anthropocentrism and the human-animal, speciesist binary confronted by critical animal studies scholars and animal liberationists.

## Queering Matrices & Opposing Assimilationist Reform

The anonymously authored political tracts under analysis serve to redefine and extend queer theory's sphere of influence to tackle additional systemic binaries beyond those situated in race, class, sex, gender, sexuality, ability, age, etc. The examination of the intersectionality of oppressions is well situated in the academic literature through the work of such authors as Patricia Hill Collins, who coined the term "matrix of domination"<sup>28</sup> to refer to the overlapping taxonomies in which "domination is organized." Collins states, "all contexts of domination incorporate some combination of intersecting oppressions...the concept of a matrix of domination encapsulates the universality of intersecting oppressions as organized through diverse local realities."<sup>29</sup> The concept of interrelated systems of oppression occurs throughout the (non-BB! specific) insurrectionist Queer literature generally. In one such foundational essay, such an intersectional location is termed the "Totality," and is defined as:

As queers we understand Normalcy. Normal, is the tyranny of our condition; reproduced in all of our relationships. Normalcy is violently reiterated in every minute of every day. We understand this Normalcy as the Totality, the Totality being the interconnection and overlapping of all oppression and misery. The Totality is the state. It is capitalism. It is civilization and empire. The totality is fence-post crucifixion. It is rape and murder at the hands of police. It is "Str8 Acting" and "No Fatties or Femmes."<sup>30</sup>

Here one can see the similarity between Collins' "matrix of domination" and the insurrectionists' "Totality," as both are meant to label the condition of existing through the collective force of intersectional systems of oppression.

The intersectional work of Collins mirrors the theoretical, praxis-based contributions of the BB! network. It is through the campaigns of BB! that one can examine their contributions to the theoretical discourse surrounding queer theory, and eventually, critical animal studies. For example, in the network's actions dealing with gay marriage, BB! communiqués have served to argue for the dissolution of the institution itself, and

expanding on traditional Marxism, they accuse marriage of serving to order society for the regulation of monogamous heteronormativity, consumption, and capital accumulation. Instead of arguing for *equal rights* for queers (that are seeking marriage), BB! advocates for the total abandonment of marriage for *all* people. The Splash Back communiqué authored by the “anonymous cell of Bash Back!” serves to further extend an anti-oppression matrix towards ever expanding arenas of domination—interrogating system hierarchies and challenging the anthropocentric view offered by traditional anti-authoritarian movements. The Splash Back! communiqué attempts to move beyond the “total liberation” framework offered by contemporary liberationists such as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Animal Liberation Front (ALF),<sup>31</sup> and instead urges what this author is terming “total solidarity.” The “total liberation” framework, while having no formally decreed definition, is the attempted articulation of a holistic liberatory politic where intersecting forms of domination are challenged by radical *human* actors. It is a struggle against “domination of all kinds.”<sup>32</sup> It is an attempt to reach a point, through human action, where one exists at a point of post-liberation, as “prior to being liberated, individuals are oppressed, subjugated, and unduly restricted.”<sup>33</sup>

An example of this “total liberation” standpoint can be seen in the Mexican website “*Liberación Total*” (Total Liberation) which reports on animal liberation, earth liberation, and anti-Statist acts of political violence (e.g., human liberation via First Nations struggles, prison issues). The site’s banner bears a tagline that reads, “*humana, animal y de la tierra*” (human, animal and the land.)<sup>34</sup> For the website’s creators, “total liberation” is the campaign of humans to *liberate* non-human animals, human animals, and the Earth from destruction, commodification, and domestication. This is accomplished through human actors attacking property owned by other human actors. In a second articulation of the “total liberation” framework, consider the September 21, 2011 communiqué issued by a Chilean cell of the ALF. In the anonymously authored message, the author(s) conclude their claim of responsibility for the arson of a rodeo by writing, “There will be no peace while animals are enslaved, while we are slaves, and as long as the Earth has a master! For Total Liberation (human, animal and Earth), Animal Liberation Front” (*Frente de Liberación Animal*, 2011). In the Chilean statement, the “we” challenging slavery is a human “we,” and the subjected “animal” slave is a *non-human* animal. Thus in these two examples, in the context of ALF/ELF attacks, as well as others reported by “*Liberación Total*,” the battle lines are squarely drawn between human saboteurs and the human owners of capital targeted in the attacks.

## From “Liberation” to “Solidarity”: Reexamining the Passivity of Victimhood

This “total solidarity,” articulated in the Splash Back communiqué, serves as a new, further development of the “total liberation” framework by interrogating the perceived passivity of the *subject* being liberated. In the case of Tilikum’s “orca-strike,” BB! queers the (oppressed) subject by taking the passivity away from enslavement, and lending agency to the orca’s act of violence. Within the “total liberation” framework, radical humans serve in defense of the Earth and animals, presenting these subjects as inert victims. Thus to offer *solidarity* and not *liberation* is to extend an anti-speciest analysis urging action from both the *subject* and its *liberator*—not simply a charity of the strong wherein *humans* save non-human animals (and the Earth) from actions carried out by other humans. This shift from the strong (human) saving the weak (animal) serves to problematize *liberation* by acknowledging that in this case, the “strong” actors (humans) are the primary oppressors of the “weak” actors (animals) through their breeding, capture, and exploitation for use in food, “research,” entertainment, and so on.

The Splash Back communiqué provides a level of agency to the enslaved orca that the larger animal liberation discourse does not. It *queers* the act of liberation by showing the non-passivity of the oppressed subject. This *agency* that is given to the orca whale, wherein the non-human animal is seen as actively attacking as an act of insurrection, serves to articulate the “concept of the attack” as explained by the contemporary insurrectionist theorist Joe Black. In his essay “Anarchism, Insurrection and Insurrectionalism,” Black writes:

The concept of “attack” is at the heart of the insurrectionist ideology, this was explained as follows: ‘Attack is the refusal of mediation, pacification, sacrifice, accommodation, and compromise in struggle. It is through acting and learning to act, not propaganda, that we will open the path to insurrection, although analysis and discussion have a role in clarifying how to act. Waiting only teaches waiting; in acting one learns to act.’<sup>35</sup>

In the case of Tilikum, the communiqué’s authors are praising the orca for precisely this tendency, namely the “refusal of mediation, pacification, sacrifice, accommodation, and compromise in struggle.”<sup>36</sup> This positive appraisal of the non-mediated, non-pacified subject exists at the heart of the modernist, insurrectionary tendency, and is central to the BB! framework. This urging for radical actors to resist pacification and mediation can be seen in militant linguistic phrasing, for example, BB!’s March 2009

communiqué, “Solidarity With All Cop Killers,” wherein the “unknowable cell of Bash Back!” writes:

On March 21st, Lovelle Mixon shot five police officers, killing four before dying in the gunfire. To bash back, is to reverse the flows of power and violence, to explode the hyper-normal into situations of previously-unthinkable revolt. We thus find the deepest affinity with all who fight back against the affective poverty and oppression of this world... As the police and media work to defame and slander Lovelle Mixon, we express our total solidarity. Until every queerbasher is beaten to a pulp and police are but a memory.<sup>37</sup>

In this communiqué we can see a similar sense of solidarity as was shown in the case of Tilikum. The BB! cell praises the action of the oppressed (e.g., Tilikum, Lovelle Mixon) against the oppressor (e.g., animal trainer, police officer) and offers solidarity on the basis of siding with “all who fight back against... oppression.”<sup>38</sup> BB!’s Splash Back communiqué adds a great deal to the queering of the animal liberation discourse, borrowing some of the tendencies from insurrectionists, but also serving to create new realms of theoretical contributions such as redefining the victimized subject as a newly radicalized actor in the social war against domination.

### **Resisting Appropriation: Challenging Notions of “Fight Back,” “Payback” & “Reprisal”**

This praise for actors who “fight back,” which occurs with frequency in the generalized insurrectionary literature, requires additional interrogation if one wishes to approach a liberatory framework that avoids appropriation. While one examines the Splash Back communiqué, it is important to consider whether the reinterpretation of Tilikum’s actions constitutes human ideologues appropriating the orca’s violence for its own ends. Are BB!’s politics concerning Tilikum self-serving? Are they further contributing to the exploitation of an already oppressed being? Although these are concerns, one could argue that BB! is avoiding the trap of appropriation and instead playing with the notion that animals act to harm their oppressors through a rejection of domination and not simply to avoid pain. Expanding this cautionary caveat outwards towards the Earth, scholars such as Jean Baudrillard have suggested that natural disasters can serve a similar function, namely, as the lived experience of “nature’s insurrection.” In *The Agony of Power*, Baudrillard writes:

The violence of natural disorders increases with the intensification of technological violence... It is as if Nature were enacting revenge... respond[ing] in the “terrorist” form of earthquakes and eruptions. In the insurrection of natural elements, there is a hint of reprisal.<sup>39</sup>

Here Baudrillard suggests a connection between ecocide and natural disasters, constructing a connection between “the intensification of technological violence” and the “revenge,” “insurrection,” and “reprisal” of earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes.

Another example of this difficult distinction can be found in an advertising campaign created by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in 2008, and used annually during “Shark Week.” In the PETA advertisement, a severed, bloody leg is shown protruding from the mouth of a shark.<sup>40</sup> The caption reads, “Payback Is Hell. Go Vegan.” The advertisement was created following the injury of Charles Wickersham, 21, attacked by a shark while spear fishing in the Gulf of Mexico in late September 2011. The not-too-subtle message in the advertisement is that the fisherman was attacked because his actions angered the shark, which chose to enact “revenge” by attacking Wickersham. In examining these incidents, it is important to examine the potentiality of anthropomorphizing the orca or shark’s aggression. Through BB!’s rhetoric, the notions of aggression and liberation are queered, but one must ask: If the whale is assumed to show anger in solidarity with those resisting oppression, how does this appropriated anger serve to queer the notion of animal agency? Furthermore, is it possible to theorize about non-human animal aggression without adopting an anthropocentric framework?

The rhetorical contributions of the Splash Back communiqué serve to redefine the victimized orca as a newly radicalized actor said to be “transforming his commodified body into an organ of the war-machine.”<sup>41</sup> Queer theory allows us to reflexively interrogate such inter-movement assumptions (i.e., animals as passive actors to be liberated) and consistently advance towards a liberatory future as new oppressions are understood. This follows a trend in justice-centric social movements, wherein one constantly advances a sphere of inclusion within liberation struggles. This tradition is evident through the departmental name change within universities of many women’s studies departments to gender studies and sexuality studies. These departments began to include discussions of masculinity and gender variance, and again when gender studies gave way to queer studies, further problematizing issues of sex, gender and sexuality. For the anonymous theorists authoring the communiqués of BB!, the movement further extends this inclusionary tradition and begins to confront the binary of species, leading to a non-anthropocentric Queer theory that subverts no-

tions of appropriation. It can be said that the insurrectionists of BB! are serving to *queer* the field of queer studies, as well as the social movement theories that inform both animal and earth liberationists.

## Queering Victimhood Through Insurrection & Social War

This idea of expanding “total liberation” towards “total solidarity” is rooted in the neo-insurrectionist milieu that has seen a resurgence in North American anarchist thought within the last decade. This movement is consciously termed *neo-insurrectionary* throughout this analysis as it refers to a period of political development within revolutionary anarchism occurring after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. This point of historical taxonomy is intentionally vague, as ideological tendencies are inherently subjective and fluid. Within this analysis, *neo-insurrectionary* anarchism is marked as reemerging *after* the armed Marxist-inspired movements of the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Red Army Faction in Germany and the George Jackson Brigade and the Black Liberation Army in the United States. This post-Marxist resurgence of illegalism within anarchism is marked by thinkers such as Alfredo Bonanno (b. 1937) and organizations such as the Informal Anarchist Federation (2003 to present) and the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire in Greece (2008 to present). This is historically marked as constituting a separate time frame from the likes of insurrectionary, illegalist predecessors such as Johann Most (1846-1906), Errico Malatesta (1853-1932) and *La Bande à Bonnot* (1911-1912), known pejoratively as the Bonnot Gang.

Within this neo-insurrectionary time, a number of pseudonym-laden individuals and collectives have emerged as formative thinkers. Once such foundational neo-insurrectionary venue has been the 1999 to 2001 French philosophical journal known as *Tiqqun*. As articulated within the pages of *Tiqqun*, as well as more widely-known publications such as *The Coming Insurrection*,<sup>42</sup> these contemporary anarcho-insurrectionists have offered up the notion of “social war” which broadly seeks to confront and destroy all observed forms of domination. While the anonymous contributors to *Tiqqun* and other publications have written book-length treatises on what constitutes such “social war” (or Civil War), one can also look to the contemporary, anarcho-insurrectionist, queer theory publication “Towards the Queerest Insurrection,” which offers the following explanation of “social war” writing: “Simply put, we want to make ruins of domination in all its varied and interlacing forms. This struggle inhibiting every social relationship is what we know as social war. It is both the process and the condition of a conflict with this totality.”<sup>43</sup>

In a sense, the authors of “Towards the Queerest Insurrection” queer the notion of “attack.” In this newly queered attack, all forms of domination exist collaboratively to form cross-movement solidarity. Thus as a queer, one must be on the side of the dominated subject—queer personhood places the subject in a position in which to attack domination is to contribute to one’s own liberation as a non-hetero “victim.” To return to “Towards the Queerest Insurrection,” the authors make this point stating:

Queer is a position from which to attack the normative—more, a position from which to understand and attack the ways in which normal is reproduced and reiterated. In destabilizing and problematizing normalcy, we can destabilize and become a problem for this Totality... It was once that to be queer was to be in direct conflict with then forces of control and domination.<sup>44</sup>

For the pamphlet’s authors, queerness places the subject on the side of the oppressed, and thus to “attack the normative” can only be to the benefit of those existing outside of the heteronormative, anthropocentric “Totality.” The authors of the *Splash Back!* communiqué clearly align themselves with this vein of insurrectionist analysis writing:

We consider the attack on Dawn Brancheau to be an act of social war, as Tilikum gave new breadth to the waves he monotonously created through his awe-inspiring splashes. Tilikum destroyed what destroyed him by transforming his commodified body into an organ of the war-machine; thus, enacting an orcan-strike.<sup>45</sup>

This expressed support and desire to enact “social war,” to “destroy what destroys you,” is seen throughout BB!’s writings as well as those in the more generalized anarcho-queer, insurrectionist milieu. BB! has made such reappropriated, violent posturing its *modus operandi*, even arranging Black Panther-style photo shoots showing masked members of the group brandishing bats, clubs, pipes, pickaxes and other weapons.<sup>7</sup> Insurrectionary queer networks such as BB! have regularly produced propaganda involving images of firearms<sup>46, 47, 48, 49</sup>, thematically mirroring imagery adopted by social movements engaged in armed insurrectionary violence such as the killing of State security forces and the bombing of banks. The question of whether these images were playful posturing, the projection of an idealist position or political theatre is unanswered but BB! actions such as the distribution of pepper spray and advocating of street fighting would urge a guess in one direction.

This adoption and redirection of violence, this *queering of victimhood* (by self-identified queers), can also be seen in an April 2011 communiqué

authored by activists associated with the similarly styled, direct action network, Anti-Racist Action (ARA).<sup>50</sup> The ARA communiqué, written by “a bitch ass faggot,” and titled “The rejection of the identity of victimization through cracking a Nazi’s skull,” praises the activists’ efforts that contributed to the hospitalization of six “Nazis,” as well as numerous additional injuries and damages to property. The communiqué proudly proclaims that the ARA activists were “people of color, working class, immigrants, women, queer, transgendered, and/or people on parole or probation.” In the communiqué, the authors queer the dichotomous victim/victimizer binary, appropriating the “ideological violence”<sup>51</sup> of racism/fascism/Nazism and reproducing it as physical violence brought by the “victimized” queers. The authors write:

The logic of the victim is constantly thrust upon us. We are said to be ‘at risk’ and must be protected and pandered to. It is said that we need others, usually the State, to protect and stand up for us. But, through the action of splitting Nazis’ heads open, we rejected the logic of victimization... When we are attacked, we will find each other and counterattack, so hard and so fierce that we will surprise even ourselves. If the Nazis call us bitch ass faggots, they might not be that far off the mark. But if they conflate those slurs with weakness, the six hospital visits they faced would prove otherwise.<sup>52</sup>

Here we can see a similar rhetorical trend as articulated in the Splash Back! communiqué. In one sense, they are both “violent” calls to arms written by traditionally oppressed classes: incarcerated animals, queers, immigrants, transgendered folks, and so on. Secondly, both the BB! and ARA communiqués queer ownership of the production of violence, presenting the traditional victim as a newly re-inscribed queered subject, a subject who will strike back when oppressed, a subject that interprets their oppression as representative of the totality of all oppressions requiring challenge.

### **Queering Movement Boundaries & Why Aren’t All Anarchists Vegans?**

The Splash Back! communiqué engages the reader in an anti-speciesist discourse through the use of *presumptive* rhetorical language. The communiqué presents an unstated presumption that queers, anarcho-insurrectionists, anti-authoritarians, and whomever else the movement perceives as their constituency, are open to queering the species binary and acting in favor of animal liberation. The presumption that those confronting the straight/queer

binary would similarly challenge the animal/human binary is contrary to the actual history of the LGBT movement, as well as the history of the larger, more generalized left. These movements remain anthropocentric in their practice and rhetoric, concerned largely with myopic, single-issue, disconnected struggles, such as those concerned with *human* rights, *women's* rights, *gay* rights, *environmental* rights, *Third World* rights, etc.<sup>53</sup> These movements, while liberatory in ideology, regularly disregard the intersectionality of an anti-speciest analysis; thus, they resist the queering of binaries wherein they (the human activist) fall on the side of the oppressor. The insurrectionist queer movement that BB! speaks to serves to queer binary analyses by focusing the critique on hierarchical domination as it exists in all its forms, including species. The actions and rhetoric embodied in the BB! communiqué challenge and reconstruct queer theory, expanding its construction of Collins's "matrix of domination," and asserting that all binaries are equal challenges waiting to be met.

This social movement observation forces the question: Why is the anarchist/anti-authoritarian left not inherently anti-speciest and pro-liberationist when a radical queer network like BB! unflinchingly positions itself within the liberationist milieu? The assumption made by BB!, by refusing to offer an argument against speciesism, *assumes* that its constituency of queers would be in solidarity against speciesism. It is difficult to discern if an activist challenging speciesism via attacks claimed under the ALF/ELF moniker would also be in support of queer insurrectionary tendencies, but one could argue that those who oppose speciesism must oppose other violently enacted binaries such as those that maintain systems of homophobia, heterosexism, queer assimilation and transphobia. Thus, the radical posturing of the ALF/ELF via its praxis and rhetoric presumes that its movement participants are "pro-queer" (or at the very least not homophobic), but this logic fails to explain why the LGBT and/or anarchist movements are not presumed to be anti-speciest?

In the contemporary leftist milieu, it is permissible to be an anarchist meat-eater, but it remains taboo to be an animal liberationist that is simultaneously racist, homophobe, or sexist. It is permissible to be an LGBT activist with HRC and also be a classist, ablest, transphobe. This anthropological social movement observation represents a double standard wherein "animal issues" are relegated to a single-issue politic, not a further articulation of the liberatory, anarchist trend towards horizontalism, solidarity, non-violence, and fostering non-coercive behaviors. Through the matter-of-fact wording presented by BB!, the communiqué queers the animal liberationist agenda by stating that to be in solidarity with BB! *is* to be in support of a firmly anti-speciesist standpoint. BB! attempts to queer con-

temporary anarchist/leftist discourse to see the (presumed) connection between the anti-coercive, anti-authoritarian, and anti-commodification politics of anarchism, and anti-speciesism. This queering is new in its articulation. If this queering had already taken place, all anti-authoritarians would be vegan in practice, in the same way that every anarchist is *presumed* to be (in practice) a feminist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, queer-positive individual.

BB! queers queer theory itself by challenging the single-issue nature of an analysis based on identity politics. By not only struggling for the interests of non-human animals, BB! acts in solidarity, rejecting a self-serving agenda. If BB! were to disregard non-human animals because they are deemed incapable of embodying queerdom and gender variance, then the movement would be falling into the trap of all other movements described above. By moving beyond the *single issue* of queerdom to the larger issue of liberation, BB! is anti-single issue and against the “let’s get mine” school of thought seen in many factions throughout the left.

The framing of Tilikum’s actions in the Splash Back! communiqué is certainly divergent from the traditionally leftist mobilizations which include anthropocentric politics within their construction of “justice.” In addition, such praise for an “orcan-strike” is also unfamiliar to the more centrist animal rights and animal liberation discourses. The discourses labeled as animal *rights* and animal *welfare* attempt to establish a protective sphere around non-human animals, while animal liberationists seek the removal of such creatures from human use. Despite these animal-centric positions, none of the three frameworks approach an understanding of animal action as constituting agency and a sense of self-awareness of one’s own domination. Even at its most liberatory ends (take, for example, liberationists such as those affiliated with the ALF), the occurrence of an animal killing a human is rarely read as the oppressed victim attacking its oppressor to resist subjugation. While both the animal rights and animal liberationist would likely oppose the enslavement of Tilikum for the purpose of human entertainment, neither would likely reinscribe the orca’s actions with a radically insurrectionist politic in an attempt at developing a cross-movement, inclusively revolutionary critique. Even in the PETA shark attack example, the advertisement focuses on “revenge,” rather than an articulated resistance to domination enacted by a non-human animal.

Queer theory informs not only this reinterpretation of subject agency, but also a subversion of the liberatory binary of animal as oppressed, human as oppressor. This equation ultimately leads one to the conclusion that if animal equals oppressed, and human equals oppressor, then perpetually a vocal human oppressor liberates the silenced, oppressed animal. This

would stand true in the case of liberationists like the ALF where human (oppressors) seek to liberate (oppressed) animals from sites of exploitation. To cite but one example, Peter Young, a prominent pro-ALF activist and former ALF political prisoner chose to name his website and newsletter “Voice of the Voiceless” (2009 to 2011), a rhetorical posturing which illustrates the liberator/oppressed subject’s dichotomous binary. The newly queered queer theory advocated by BB! offers the question: How does this performance of Tilikum’s liberation queer the speciest hierarchy adopted by the animal liberation discourse—a discourse that privileges humans through the maintenance of human as liberator and animal as passive victim. In sum, the theoretical contributions of BB!, as shown in the Splash Back! communiqué, can be understood as the queering of the boundaries of *liberator* and *liberated subject*, as well as expanding the realm of binaries to include species.

## Conclusion

Though this chapter centers on a *single* piece of political theatrics in order to discuss the larger insurrectionary contemporary tendencies, further analysis should examine popularized texts such as the 2011 movie *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, or the as yet unreleased book, *Death at Sea World*. Subsequent explorations within a newly queered study of animal subjugation must raise the question: Do these cinematic and written texts anthropomorphize animal liberation in a similar way, presenting non-human animals as “striking back”? Further inquiry into such texts is necessary to understand these interpretations and their impact on our understanding of “violence” carried out by non-human animals. The queering of the liberation discourse should be understood as a freeing and positive step in our pursuits of expanding the sphere of inclusivity to non-human animals, thus it would benefit the field of both critical animal studies and queer studies for increased cross-pollination and collaborative analysis between the two fields of study.

A holistic, anti-authoritarian framework must include a rejection of speciesism in order to truly approach the potentiality of challenging domination and hierarchy in the hopes of ushering in a more liberatory world. Parochial, sectarian and single-issue-based agendas will never offer revolutionary potential as they will always be mired in contradiction and the leveraging of the desires of one (oppressed class) over the rights of another. The LGBT, anarchist, and animal rights movements are examples of efforts that have fallen short of developing an analysis that is truly intersectional and inclusive. While the LGBT movement fails to challenge hi-

erarchies, including those found in class and race, other movements, such as those identified with the anarchist left, fail to challenge speciesism. The neo-insurrectionist critique offered by Bash Back! will also likely leave some by the wayside, though at its foundation, it contains a tendency to expand an analysis outward, analyzing additional caveats of known oppressions among its ideologues as time passes. This political understanding, one in which species hierarchies are understood as similar to those seen in race and class, is a centerpiece of a profoundly unique liberatory politic.

## Notes

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14. Garcia, "Killer whale..."
15. Garcia, "Sea World..."
16. D.J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. 206.
17. *Ibid.*, pp.223, 237.
18. *Towards the Queerest Insurrection* (Milwaukee, WI: Mary Nardini Gang, 2008), [http://zinelibRARY.info/files/Queerest%20Final\\_0.pdf](http://zinelibRARY.info/files/Queerest%20Final_0.pdf) (accessed August 1, 2011), VI.
19. Bash Back!ers In Support of Autonomous Animal Action Call for Trans-Species Solidarity With Tilikum: An autonomous cell of Bash Back! is calling for solidarity with sea criminal Tilikum, the orca responsible for killing a trainer at Sea World Orlando at the end of February. We consider the attack on Dawn Brancheau to be an act of social war, as Tilikum gave new breadth to the waves he monotonously created through his awe-inspiring splashes. Tilikum destroyed what destroyed him by transforming his commodified body into an organ of the war-machine; thus, enacting an orcan-strike. For too long he had been confined as a spectacle for the American populus to consume. The affect of his bodily revolt has aided in helping us all realize the potentiality of reifying our underlying desires. Members of the American Family Association have come out in favor of stoning Tilikum to death for this strike against systems of domination. In response, the nonhuman political prisoners at Sea World Orlando have organized the first chapter of Splash Back!, an insurrectionary tendency of sea animals dedicated to destroying all forms of oppression. Bash Back! must be allies in the struggle for animal liberation, as well as against the religious right which has sought to criminalize the bodies of queers and orcas for so long. We are calling for solidarity actions with Tilikum across the country to support animal autonomy and resistance. Orcas have been criminalized for too long; the time for sea animal liberation is now. Solidarity with all Trainer Killers!



(March 4, 2010)

20. Bash Back! News, "Bash Back!ers in Support of Autonomous Animal Action Call For Trans-Species Solidarity With Tillikum," *Anarchist News* (March 3, 2010), <http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/10815> (accessed August 1, 2011).
21. HRC is infamous within a Queer critique for, amongst other things, acting counter to the interests of transgendered persons. Despite this history, they remain labeled as a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights group. HRC is often critiqued for solely representing the interests of homosexual, white, upper-class, male-bodied persons despite presenting themselves in a more inclusive light. For an example of the blasé, matter-of-fact nature in which one can cast such a critique, one can view "A Critique of Anti-Assimilation Part I." Despite these commonly cited shortcomings, for the sake of decipherable acronym-based language, HRC will be included within the LGBT grouping.
22. For a more detailed description of the structuring and organization of the Bash Back network, see the article "Reflections on the Demise of Bash Back!," contained in the zine *Pink and Black Attack* #6. The zine is available in full at: <http://zinelibrary.info/files/PABA6.pdf> (Accessed 01 August 2011) and the article reposted at <http://sketchythoughts.blogspot.com/2010/09/reflections-on-demise-of-bash-back.html> (accessed 01 August 2011).
23. Bash Back! Denver, Blurbs: About Me, (N.d.), <http://www.myspace.com/bashbackdenver> (Accessed August 1, 2011); Bash Back! Philly, Blurbs: About Me, (N.d.), <http://www.myspace.com/bashbackphilly> (accessed August 1, 2011).
24. Bash Back! Chicago, Blurbs: About Me, (N.d.), <http://www.myspace.com/bashback> (accessed August 1, 2011).
25. Bash Back! Fort Wayne, Blurbs: About Me, (N.d.), <http://www.myspace.com>.

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26. Bash Back! Chicago, n.d.; Bash Back! Fort Wayne, n.d.
  27. Bash Back! Memphis, "Memphis area Anti-Authoritarians networking & organizing," *Infoshop.org Forums* (March 10, 2008), <http://forums.infoshop.org/viewtopic.php?t=7908&f=2#p28106> (accessed August 1, 2011).
  28. P H Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), pp. 227-228.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
  30. *Towards the Queerest Insurrection*, II.
  31. The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and Earth Liberation Front (ELF) are adoptable monikers chosen by clandestine actors who carryout acts of property destruction, sabotage and theft targeting business seen as harming the Earth and non-human animals. They are similarly styled to the Bash Back! (BB!) network in that there is no central leadership but rather cells operating in a loosely-linked network. The network shares Points of Unity, but movement strategy and campaigns are developed by attackers' actions and inter-movement debate via print and electronic publications. The ALF/ELF are responsible for thousands of attacks globally, and in the United States, have been consistently termed the 'number one domestic terrorist threat' by the FBI for over ten years.
  32. S. Best, "Rethinking Revolution: Total Liberation, Alliance Politics, and a Prolegomena to Resistance Movements in the Twenty-First Century," in *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, ed. R Amster, et. al. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), p. 199.
  33. M Bernstein, "Legitimizing Liberation", in *Terrorists or Freedom Fighter: Reflections on the Liberation of Animals*, ed. S. Best, and A. Nocella (New York, NY: Lantern Press, 2004), p. 93.
  34. <http://www.liberaciontotal.lahaine.org/> (as of 01 August 2011)



The banner for the Mexican website, Total Liberation as seen on August 1, 2011. As of January 2012, the banner image has since been modified. It now appears without inlaid text, and sits about the words, "Against all forms of domination!" (*Contra toda forma de dominacion!*)

35. J. Black, "Anarchism, insurrections and Insurrectionalism," *Red & Black Revolution* 11 (July 19, 2006), <http://www.ainfos.ca/06/jul/ainfos00232.html> (accessed August 1, 2011).
36. *Ibid.*

37. Bash Back! News, "Solidarity With All Cop Killers," *Indy Bay* (March 28, 2009), <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2009/03/28/18584116.php> (accessed August 1, 2011).
38. *Ibid.*
39. J Baudrillard, *The Agony of Power* (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e)/MIT Press, 2010), p.101.
40. [http://blog.peta2.com/payback\\_is\\_hell.JPG](http://blog.peta2.com/payback_is_hell.JPG)



41. Bash Back! News, "Bash Back!ers in Support of Autonomous...".
42. Other contemporary examples of insurrectionist thought include publications by The Institute for Experimental Freedom (authors of "Politics is Not a Banana: The Journal of Vulgar Discourse"), the zines/websites *Fire to the Prisons* ([firetothepisons.com](http://firetothepisons.com)), *Modesto Anarcho* ([modestonanarcho.org](http://modestonanarcho.org)), 325 ([325.nostate.net](http://325.nostate.net)), blogs/news sites including <http://waronsociety.noblogs.org/>, <http://sysiphus-angrynewsfromaroundtheworld.blogspot.com/>, <http://actforfreedomnow.wordpress.com/>, <http://thisisourjob.wordpress.com/>, <http://socialrupture.tumblr.com/>, the communiqués of the Greek network known as Conspiracy of Fire Cells, and the writings of Italian theorist and militant Alfredo M. Bonanno.
43. *Towards the Queerest...*, III.
44. *Ibid.*, VII-VIII.
45. Bash Back! News, "Bash Back!ers in Support of Autonomous...".
46. An image circulated to advertise for Bash Back!'s 2010 convergence in Denver, CO. Notice the handgun, brass knuckles and the insurrectionist-styled publication, "Becoming, Riot."



47.

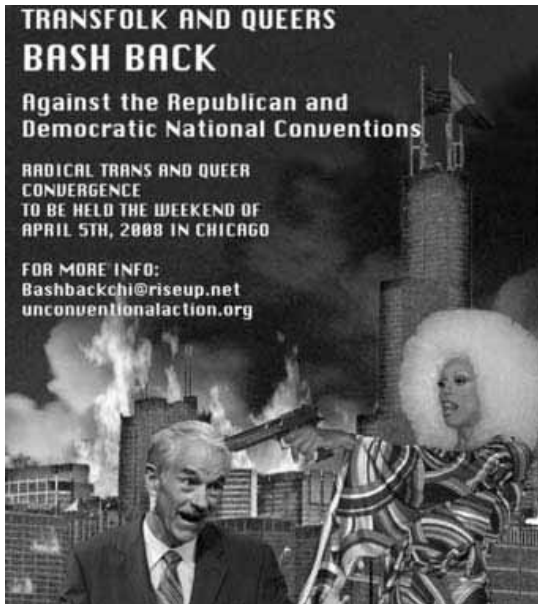
An image appearing in “Towards the Queerest Insurrection” as well as reprinted in ideologically aligned insurrectionary Queer publications.

48.



Advertisement for April 2008 Bash Back! action convergences coinciding with the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. The purpose of the convergence is “to facilitate radical Queer and Trans organizing against the Party Conventions.” (Bash Back! Chicago, 2008)

49.



Advertisement for April 2008 Bash Back! action convergences coinciding with the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. The purpose of the convergence is “to facilitate radical Queer and Trans organizing against the Party Conventions.” (Bash Back! Chicago, 2008) Pictured in the ad is drag queen Ru Paul shooting Presidential candidate Ron Paul while the city burns in the background.

50. Anti-Racist Action (ARA) is a network of activists who assemble for ad hoc actions opposing white supremacist, neo-Nazi, anti-abortion and affiliated movements. ARA believes in directly confronting those they oppose through force and attempting to prevent the movements they target from carryout out public functions. For example, ARA will regularly attempt to prevent Aryan Nations recruiting drives or KKK regional gatherings. The national network shares Points of Unity and actions are organized by cell-type chapter that function on a quasi-clandestine level. They are different from the ALF/ELF/BB! in that ARA's focus is not on carryout our clandestine acts of property destruction, but rather on hosting public marches and counter-protests in reaction to the organizing plans of white supremacists, neo-Nazis, etc.
51. S. Zizek, *Violence* (New York, NY: Picador, 2008), p.10.
52. A Bitch Ass Faggot, "Anti-Racist Action: The rejection of the identity of victimization through cracking a Nazi's skull," *Anarchist News* (April 16, 2011), <http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/14443> (accessed August 1, 2011).
53. Best 2009, p. 189.



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### DAWN OF THE DEAD: A STUDENT NARRATIVE ON COLLECTIVE CLASSROOMS

FERNANDO JANER SÁNCHEZ

In addition to the life-death cycle basic to nature, there is almost an unnatural living death: life which is denied its fullness.

—Paulo Freire

The social work student is not dead. The student reflects critically on lua<sup>1</sup> environment, personal skills, and professional experience. The student acts according to ethical principles and political commitments. Together with other students, the student organizes wellness days, buses to political rallies, and participates in representative committees. Remarkably, the social work student balances work, internship, school, and family. The student reads, writes, makes presentations, and even participates in class.

The social work student is not alive. The social work student is not alive because lua participation in school affairs is circumscribed to an immaterial state. The student in school government speaks with a muffled voice. The student in committees is frustrated by the resistance to progressive change from faculty and administrators. The student rarely hears the writing of other students. The student does not know a vigorous practice of debate in the classroom. The student sees only rare moments of sustained dialogue. The student who would empower individuals, families, and communities is not trusted to manage a lesson. The student is not dead, yet not alive.

In the following pages, I will describe and analyze my experiences as a graduate student of social work. This critique will be mainly focused on the actual administration of participation in the classroom. In my experience, this administration is mostly equivalent to the suppression of meaningful dialogue. This critique will also consider more broadly student par-

ticipation in learning. I am moved by a strong egalitarian spirit that, together with core social work ethical values, necessarily creates an indictment of the role reserved for students and the models of organization discussed in my education. These values also suggest that the clearer means of mending this situation is through the strengthening of decentralized facilitation in collectively-run classrooms.

This discussion will examine my experience with the most radical gesture of removing the teacher from the classroom. It will alternatively involve the most humble supplication to allow student dialogue to be sustained without being continually curbed, shut down, or taken hostage by even well-meaning teachers. In any case, it calls for a critical reflection not on student participation, but on teacher participation, on the moments the teacher chooses to make a comment. For this discussion, I have chosen examples only if they seem illustrative of the general practice and spirit of education I have experienced. I have also tried as much as possible to use references that were assigned in course syllabi. This, I hope, will help persuade the reader of the monstrous duality that the social work student suffers.

### **Agree Not to Disagree**

The first few meetings of the class are, for me, filled with the tension between creating a place where ideas can be safely aired and questioned and creating a place where we can push, confront, and challenge one another's ideas.<sup>2</sup>

The tension the author describes is probably a good sign that a group of people are on their way to establishing effective relationships for intellectual growth. If I had to judge by the effect created in most of my courses, and the apparent attitudes of many instructors, I would have to guess that few of them battled this kind of tension. I believe I can trace the beginnings of my zombieification to the first classes where I perceived that the instructor had very little interest in exploring different critiques of the material. I first missed the tension between safety and debate in a course dealing mostly with welfare policy. In this course, the instructor seemed mostly interested in getting through the syllabus she had been assigned to cover. From that semester, I recalled perhaps three moments of genuine conversations among students, and no apparent disagreements. It would have made little difference to buy the course pack and submit the written assignments to a mailbox.

The next experience in which I confronted the disillusion that was progressively mortifying me was in a course commonly known as "Founda-

tions.” There were actually some differing opinions voiced in this course, but since the instructor agreed with absolutely everything, it was hard to carry out a discussion beyond a superficial level. Perhaps the instructor was afraid of conflict, and this fear was linked to her inability to set up an atmosphere where students could safely but nevertheless actively engage in their contrasting points of view.

This was all the sadder because this course had a large component examining the ethical values of the profession. It is hard to imagine how an ethical formation would be developed by an occasional discussion of a list of principles. There are surely many complex and difficult situations in the field, and it was apparent that different students had different takes on appropriate courses of action. Without an environment that allowed the students to take those differences seriously, and examine them closely in an ongoing free debate, there is very little chance that we could have been able to work on deeply held beliefs about what is right and wrong.

Agreeing to disagree is one of the guidelines commonly mentioned in groups and trainings. It is meant to encourage participants to respect each other’s opinions. This nod to intellectual diversity is rarely effective because people need more preparation and exercise than is usually allowed to be truly able to handle different, perhaps offensive, points of view. More importantly, we need preparation to take the crucial next step after conflict: finding possible common grounds without censoring any remaining separate stands.

In my experience, it seems that instructors have secretly convened on the rule of agreeing not to disagree. Respect has ceased to be a means to an engaged conversation, and has become an end in itself. Unfortunately, stripped of the critical debate that it would secure, respect is degraded to shallow politeness. Thinking about the scarcity of meaningful disagreements in my classes, I conjectured that our classes were more like therapeutic support groups than academic forums. Even a support group, I came later to realize, is better equipped to invite members to difficult self-reflexive work. When students and instructor agree not to disagree, they avoid the moments of tension and the uncomfortable silences from which realistic and useful learning grows. Of course, if the instructors do not provide the structure necessary to handle those moments, a group very reasonably will avoid what it has little confidence of handling.

Lathrop & Connolly advocate for a type of forum in their graduate seminars that will precisely “facilitate moments of uncomfortable disruption, without triggering defensiveness, anger, or entrenchment.”<sup>3</sup> It will be noteworthy for our later discussion that one of the main aspects of how

they see genuine discussion fostered is by involving teaching assistants and students in the design and facilitation of the seminars.

"Conflict sharpens the discussion," says Myles Horton,<sup>4</sup> veteran long-time activist and educator, and distinguished member of the Community Organization and Planning (CO & P) curriculum. His approach calls for using conflict positively, in fact, for not resolving a specific problem but using it to involve the whole group in the discussion. The involvement of the group, he finds, leads to the discovery of complications in the issue that might not have been initially stated. Because he believes the group should take over the discussion, he goes to the extent of saying, "you don't even try to referee between two people."<sup>5</sup>

Using conflict positively might be too lofty a goal in a situation where basic student discussion time is so meager. An overview of the syllabi of different courses reveals interesting clues. Class participation as a percentage of grade, when it is mentioned at all, is sometimes identified as one of several factors contributing only to an Honors grade. In courses where an actual percentage is assigned, discussion is ranked sometimes as 15 percent of the grade. How are we to understand this? Does it mean that in a ten-week course, a student that speaks in two classes is an over-achiever? How much of the discussion is actually consumed by a soliloquy of the professor? James Korn estimates that the lecture-discussion method is an oxymoron because the teacher typically lectures 90 percent of the time, while a fourth of students discusses during 10 percent of the time.<sup>6</sup>

In science classes, the lab is a chance to practice while instruction recedes into the background. In high school, I remember making a stink bomb, and burning another student with glass. In our classes, labs more often than not are just another extension of the regime of the lecture, which stinks in a different way. What we burn are our chances of learning practically how to learn and work in a group as equals.

I must clarify that I personally enjoy a good lecture. They can be fascinating, and even as I write this, I feel that I would like to hear an interesting lecture on any number of topics. It is, however, foolish to think that any individual, regardless of experience, personality, knowledge, or intellectual capacity could produce lectures for an entire semester without eventually inflicting on students the torture of boredom. Martin Luther King was a great orator, and most of us remember from him only a few lines.

I also have a dream: a classroom where practical and relevant games for the imagination are interweaved by a lively dialogue among students and tactically scheduled lectures by the instructor, or guest speakers. That classroom distinguishes between resources and system. As a resource, a

lecture would surely be enjoyable to this animated corpse. As a system, it has the same harmful consequences that abuse of many substances has; it kills neurons, and stunts growth.

In an advanced state of putrefaction, and struggling with the issues articulated by the aforementioned authors, I arrived in the second course of the CO & P sequence. During the first week of classes, I expressed my concern to the professor about the absence of disagreement in all my classes. This became a major concern for me, and even a puzzle. It could not be that everybody agrees in school, I told her. She was very receptive. In fact, she had already fostered a group atmosphere the semester prior, and in the one in progress we continued to develop.

As the class progressed, with the passionate incitement of our professor, our group comfort grew, and the violence of our undead spell was somewhat ameliorated. Nevertheless, we remained unaware of what being fully alive is. It would take remarkable circumstances later in the semester to completely exorcise our tragic morbidity, and become a fully empowered community of learners.

## Dawn

Education is what happens to the other person, not what comes out of the mouth of the educator. You have to posit trust in the learner although the people you are dealing with may not, on the surface, seem to merit that trust. If you believe in democracy, which I do, you have to believe that people have the capacity within themselves to develop the ability to *govern themselves*<sup>7</sup>

This passage is taken from a reading assigned for the sessions during which the students broke our final links to the grave, and started running our own course. The entire paragraph is quoted because it captures the best aspirations of the mobilized students. It also creates an ironic twist that this passage was part of the assigned material for the class, given the outcome of the mobilization.

In the spring of 2004, something remarkable happened. In a classroom, professor and students ceased to be parent and adolescents as the latter became independent. Remarkably, this metaphor does not fully apply because instead of growing in a dialectical spiral to become professors, the students became a collective of learners. In the spring of 2004, I was involved in a minor revolt in education.

This revolt started curiously enough not from the anger of the masses, but by serendipity. The professor for our course had a medical emergency three quarters into the semester, being forced to retire for an uncertain

amount of time. Instead of being assigned a substitute, the professor closest to having to assume responsibility for the class gave us a choice: to run the course ourselves. And so we did.

Having spent close to a year together, the group felt ready to assume responsibility for their own relationships, and for the management of the classroom. In fact, one of the main arguments for this course of action was the concern that other alternatives might disrupt the chemistry of dialogue that were achieved. The chemistry had also been made possible by the literature and the facilitation of the professor during that previous year, so that this felt not like a break, but more like the natural evolution of our political growth. So much so, that having received the announcement on the week where the scheduled topic was leadership development, this seemed more a prank from the faculty, an intentional hands-on test.

From that point on, the students assigned readings, designed activities, facilitated the discussion in a decentralized way, and performed post-session evaluations of our group dynamics and the quality of our discussions. The adjustments in our roles resulted, as declared by many students, in an increase in investment, sense of responsibility, participation in discussion, and satisfaction. Some of us felt that it was much more important to attend the class now that it was our responsibility to make it happen. The best evidence of our outcomes was provided on a morning when, as a nearby class filed out of the room because the professor was absent that day, we continued our session.

The new experiences also resulted in another turn of events unforeseen to the students and probably even to the professor who encouraged the fateful choice. It made the already-existing seed of our revolt germinate. One of the students, right now writing this essay, suggested to the rest of the class that they organize the following semester's course as a similar collectively-run classroom. The experience had whetted our appetite for more. For my peers, it seemed like a natural progression, and a very attractive alternative to the available options. For me, it seemed the logical challenge and test before graduating as a community organizer.

The desire for it was overwhelming among the class, so a group proceeded to meet to work on a proposal. After several meetings, a group finalized a proposal (see appendix), and a meeting was arranged between representatives of the class and faculty.

Participation in the preparatory meetings and in the draft of the proposal was basically voluntary, different people joining in at different times according to availability. However, the first questions about eligibility and delegation arose in deciding who would attend the meeting with professors. In fact, the very idea of "deciding who" arose like a ripple in the

pond of our egalitarianism as it brought with it the hard questions about exclusion, representation, and potentially, hierarchy.

In the end, there was no conflict. The number of people actually available to attend seemed adequate to the occasion. The distribution of roles among speakers, note-takers, and observers happened also, to the best of my judgment, according to individual preferences and self-assessments.

I must make a note about the role of observers. They were thought of as active participants that, free from having to describe any aspect of the proposal, could concentrate on analyzing the dynamics of the meeting, and give feedback to the speakers at appropriate times. This clarification seems necessary given the dichotomies between observation and action that are commonly made, in particular, in reference to the politically charged term "collective." Horton, discussing the attendance of an expert at workshops in his organization, states that "we didn't have observers, but he could come, and make a contribution."<sup>8</sup> Perhaps we settled into an unrighteous enforcement of spectator status for some, but it seemed in this experience that the task of the observer was a valuable task, and that it can be an active role in specific instances if it is adequately engaged in a group dynamic. I consider this a lesson for the future from this experience.

What the lesson is about exclusion I see less clearly. What if a member had really wanted to attend the meeting, but the rest of the group felt it was not appropriate? I prefer to rely on self-selection as much as possible, even supported self-selection. However, in those times where even supported self-selection does not avoid internal conflict, I wonder what mechanisms serve to preserve both the solidarity of the group and its efficacy.

As a process, I would say the meeting with two professors, both of which were to teach the course in question, went well. It was a solid learning experience. The proposal was eloquently presented and defended. The team of students worked well together, performing their tasks in what I would consider harmonious fashion. There were no recriminations, or second guesses. As a group, we assimilated and understood the events uniformly and accurately. The necessity of our demands was even illustrated in the very meeting when a brilliant but timid peer was cut off by one of the professors so that she forgot her point.

As a task, it was a demoralizing failure. The main objective of the proposal was uncompromisingly rejected with no hope of a second round of negotiations. The most significant component of the proposal, and the most relevant for this narrative, was related to the facilitation of the course. We planned to run the course through what is called feminist facilitation. This technique, suggested to the class by the professor that visited us, consists of the last person to speak calling on the next, effectively re-

moving a central facilitator and arbiter of participation. That center being removed, it paved the way for the bolder point of our proposal: that the professor be removed from the classroom. Not from the course, however, as we expected the professor to be actively engaged providing support and supervision in ways that preserved the integrity of our dynamic.

During the meeting, our lack of organizing experience showed. We were asked before discussing the proposal what we thought of the current syllabus for the course in question. Our research had been about the lack of satisfaction from graduates, and we had not looked at the syllabus. Even though our proposal had very little to do with the syllabus, we were from the outset put in an apologetic position which debilitated our psychological leverage. Ironically, this was achieved by the professor who seemed less opposed in principle to our proposal, but who was evidently a savvy negotiator.

When we actually reached the heart of the matter, the arguments, all against, centered on institutional recognition, expertise, accountability, and even the Socratic Method. The professor seemingly less opposed cited the probable disapproval of regulating bodies for an experiment with a core course. This professor cited as well that she would not want to toss out their years of expertise. The other professor cited his use of the Socratic method to challenge the student with questions into being an active agent in their education. This method, it was argued, would promote the increased sense of ownership that the collective had experienced. It is, of course, unlikely that this method would make classmates meet if the professor were absent.

The method also implied an inability of students to challenge ourselves. This professor also represented the issue of accountability for the evaluation of the students. In what seemed the harshest statement of the discussion, the inability of ensuring quality education and quality professionals without being present at every session was offered as the rationale for the final judgment, "I refuse to sign on to mediocrity." In fact, they refused to sign on to the proposal, and indicated that there really was no need for further meetings as we had arrived at the final answer.

There was no second round. The outcome of the meeting completely deflated the momentum of the group. There were no more e-mails, none reporting, none inquiring. It was almost mysterious to experience how completely demoralization overcame, how easy resignation set in, how expected defeat was even by ourselves. As it was heartbreaking to see negotiating skills used on us by those we expected to learn them from. That meeting was the end of our short-lived revolution.

## Dusk

We really did not realize how drastic proposing the absence of the professor might sound. It was not that we did not anticipate opposition. In fact, many students were sure that the professors would say no, while I personally felt that they were being paranoid or melodramatic. I figured that someone that is an educator, a social worker, and a community organizer is structurally over-determined to favor democratic empowerment, and unobtrusive support. I expected them to be intuitively attuned to our desires. This is perhaps why I failed to visualize how threatening not having the prerogative of calling on who speaks could be to the bearer of academic power.

Perhaps the social work student is a victim of *lua* success. Perhaps our education is seductive enough that it allows us to aim for more empowerment. Our motivation was not spiteful, or confrontational. The limits we pushed in our proposal were entirely consistent with our curriculum, and what we had been nurtured to develop. It was literally what we had been taught: the facilitation technique, the passage I quoted.

As I have mentioned, the professor we had was very well regarded. It is surely not a coincidence that it was in an encouraging course, and after being freed from authority to further our growth, that we could push the ultimate limit, found the biggest reward, and also the biggest disillusion.

To be sure, part of the motivation for many of the students was the desire to avoid over-bearing professors in future courses. A bigger part I believe was the desire to deal concretely with questions of authority and distribution in the classroom. It was our desire to critically assess the effect of the professor. These were questions that had to do with systems not with personalities. The system, that is, the pedagogy, cannot at times be accounted for, or equated, to the skills, technique, or style of the professor.

The psychological dynamics of students, their internalized objects, their susceptibility to silence in front of a professor, their converse desire for superiority over others in the eyes of a figure with power are serious features of the psycho-political make-up of the classroom. These phenomena can and should be dealt with by any teacher. Just as well, in any institution committed to empowerment, to the creation of safe environments for the specific needs of different populations, to mutual aid, and to removing the obstacles to the emergence of that cooperation, it is perfectly justifiable to allow for a space where the students might work out those issues by themselves. Just as I could envision a model for working out those issues with the professor, I can envision one supplementary instant

where the benefits of exploring those issues with reduced risk are prioritized.

It was striking that a model basically consisting of student mutual aid would be considered questionable, would be considered "a different model." In the mandatory group work course, we spend all semester clarifying the definition of group purpose to exclude mutual aid because it is considered intrinsic to groups. The readings underscore its importance.<sup>9</sup> We practiced facilitation with the conscious goal of getting members to talk to each other, and not to the facilitator. With this experience, I would have expected what is perhaps the most politically engaged of all methods, community organization, to be a natural setting for practicing mutual aid. Unfortunately, what is preached for clients is not practiced for the undead student.

The separate existences of the social work student are parallel to the separation between discourse and practice of the social work school. For this research, I traced the concept of mutual aid to the work of Peter Kropotkin.<sup>10</sup> A naturalist, he was one of several early dissenters from Darwinian orthodoxy regarding life primarily as a struggle. He documented numerous examples of cooperation in the natural world, but did not stop his analysis there. An anarchist comrade, he also documented the existence of cooperation in many realms of human organization to show that authority and hierarchy are by no means universal or necessary, even in expectedly competitive realms such as commerce and the military.

This informs our discussion because of the lack of egalitarian models of organization in social work education. This lack exists in areas ranging from education to administration. The gory separation of life makes the mutual aid classroom sound shocking. That gory separation also prevents the moribund student from learning about anything but hierarchical models of management. Taking the required Administration course, I was puzzled that the literature would provide examples only from business corporations and the military.<sup>11</sup> I originally started to write about the curriculum's reverence to military and industrial models, but was forced to redefine my statements when, upon reading the work of Kropotkin, I saw that even when discussing the military and commerce, there are examples of non-hierarchical cooperation. It is then all the more astounding how little credibility our curriculum gives to mutual aid, and how limited our models for participation are.

The highest point of student participation in a classroom is commonly the oral report, individually or in a group. It was suggested to us in the meeting for the collective class that there would be plenty of opportunities for participation in the form of activities and presentations. The undead

student needs a more organic model of participation to overcome lua conflicted half-organic state. In our case, we were asking to be alive, ad we were offered a showcase in a museum without them realizing the irony of the offer.

The oral report is a sad form of tokenism. Having denied students their dialogue, it returns their mutilated power to them as a requirement for a grade. You cannot enforce disenfranchisement, and then give students their 15 minutes of fame. The results are predictably boring, and they lock both instructor and students in a vicious cycle where both, frustrated, feel the other is holding back.

There is also a more insidious aspect to the student presentation. It recruits the students for the continuation of the regime of lecturing. It requires them to take the role of the oppressor in that regime. It is akin to recruiting members of invaded countries to police themselves. With the pretext of allowing student participation and leadership, the oral report sacrifices proper collective sharing through exchange, dialogue, and debate. Not knowing any other models, students most often regurgitate information to their peers, as professors entreat them to make their presentations creative. Should the students, in fact, create something different, they will have to most likely face the pain of going back to the grave. The oral report, in Freirian terms, reproduces the banking system by training students to make deposits themselves.

The work of Paulo Freire, another distinguished member of the social work curriculum, provides an ideal reference point for the theme of this essay. In some ways, our peculiar classroom does start already having overcome a system of banking-education, and tries to go beyond its glass ceiling into a territory not specifically mapped out in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In other ways, his commentary provides accurate insight.

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility.<sup>12</sup>

His discussion of the internalization of power dynamics relates us back to the need to examine critically the presence of the professor in a model that seeks to optimize collective learning. The historical and psychological baggage in the student's perception of teacher as authority is not sufficiently addressed by acknowledging it, and then expecting the student to be over it. It deserves in appropriate circumstances that the students be allowed a space to question without fear or risk. It is an understandable moment in a process of healing.

Freire understands that the way for the oppressed to overcome their internal contradiction is through perceiving and acting on a reality simultaneously. A perception of reality not followed by a critical intervention is not an accurate perception, he declares. This refers me to the need our class felt to act on the understanding of our relationships we had gained, and the duty of the administration to facilitate that process, lest they discredit the knowledge they themselves had provided, lest they made it an inaccurate perception. To block this progress toward collective self-definition is oppression, according to Freire. It is a situation where A hinders B's pursuit of self-affirmation.<sup>13</sup>

Freire firmly believes that the oppressed must be among the developers of their pedagogy. This seems right, and I believe both professors would have agreed. However, the text is less clear about those occasions where the interests of the oppressed grow to diverge from those of other actors among the developers of that pedagogy. The professors when asked responded that as community organizers they did not have to be present at every event in order to have successful organizing. They were not ready, unfortunately, to follow the analogy to the classroom. They were not able to accept any other active role, as was requested, that was not as protagonists. This vacillation might be due to a dynamic that the text does comment on.

It speaks of those who camouflage their fear of freedom by presenting themselves as defenders of freedom, their misgivings stated with an air of sobriety. They confuse freedom with the status quo, so that whatever threatens the status quo is seen as threatening freedom.<sup>14</sup> The discourse of protecting the students and the world from mediocrity similarly seems to camouflage the basic belief in the helpless mediocrity of students if they are denied a Socratic protagonist in their midst. In trying to stretch our minds, they seem to forget a goal which Horton remembers well.

Stretching people's minds is part of educating, but always in terms of a democratic goal. That means you have to trust people's ability to develop their capacity for working collectively to solve their own problems.<sup>15</sup> There is an optimistic assumption in the theory of Freire. The theory of dialogical action proposes that education needs to proceed from an active dialogue between teacher-student and student-teacher. Dialogue is true communication, which is the bridge to authentic cooperation. However, I wonder if an instructor is capable of participating in a dialogue of learners. The past record does not point to a bright future. It seems the forces tugging at that role are too powerful. So close to therapists, social work professors somehow still retain the notion that their words heal. Somehow they still suffer from the compulsion to intervene. The amount of trauma,

on the other hand, in the disfigured body of the undead student might be too much even if an instructor understood the power of silence, and of trusting the group. It might be that only as an educational support, as a supervisor, the teacher can be slowly introduced into a community of learners so that with time, trust can build, and all can learn to share.

Perhaps dialogic action, and mutual aid are not that hard to practice, and it is only that the language of theorists obfuscates their simplicity. When it comes to communication, academics can be primitive creatures. So we must speak in a simpler language. We must use phrases they can understand: the pedagogy of shutting the hell up!

I am being only partly facetious. I do believe that any message that asks power or control to be conceded is frequently lost to the listener. The only example of student-run courses that I found comes from a 1967 abstract e-mailed to me by a college peer.<sup>16</sup> I was not able unfortunately to attain the full article. It was interesting to read that they had the same outcomes in terms of enthusiasm, investment, and skill development as our class. It is also amusing to read that the conclusion of the authors was not about the efficacy of student-run seminars, but that educators need to pay greater attention to student interests.

I also believe that a classroom is a complex environment, and a daunting responsibility for anyone facilitating its endeavors. Anyone attempting that task needs more specific guidance and structure than might be provided by historical materialist pedagogy. We need time-limits for instructors, rotating facilitation, and theories of how to converse in a classroom, not only of education more broadly.

I started my research looking for more examples of facilitation types such as the feminist facilitation practiced in our collective classroom. I wanted to know what concrete options were available to carry out a balanced conversation in a group. I faulted most of the literature of critiques of education for not focusing on the inner workings of the classroom. When they did focus on those inner workings, evaluation predominated over speech.

The work of A.S. Neill provides an interesting twist to this phenomenon. His commentary is also on education without paying too much attention to the classroom. In his case, however, he is intentionally advocating for a model of student empowerment so actualized that it renders what goes on in the classroom unimportant. In the boarding school in England in which Neill worked, a general student meeting determines most of the affairs of the school. He found in his experience that self-government is the most valuable aspect of a child's education. "In my opinion, one weekly General Meeting is of more value than a week's curriculum of school

subjects.”<sup>17</sup> It was painful to read about a place where a six-year-old has the same right to voice and vote as the director, while studying at a school where in the last semester before I graduate I am still too potentially “mediocre” to carry on a challenging discussion without the safety net of authority. This is particularly bewildering when it is precisely the presence of authority that prevents the discussion from being challenging. Conversely, if self-government provides invaluable education for children six through seventeen, would it not be the most appropriate pedagogy for community organizers, social workers, or for that matter, any student in a democratic society?

I have saved for last a very special reference. It is an article that deals with virtual learning communities, so it is not particularly relevant to this analysis. The title alone, however, conveys its importance: *Virtual Learning Communities: a Student's Perspective*.<sup>18</sup> The reader must trust that I have glanced in the electronic database at over 200 titles of articles on cooperative, collaborative, critical, problem-posing education. As far as I could detect, this is the only article written by a student. It forces me to restate the question, are professors capable of dialogue?

### A Voice from Beyond

Is my spirit dying? Am I suffering a permanent loss in my intellect, emotions, and self-actualization? Will there still be hope for me if I survive? Will my brain and my heart rebound? Is this like some drugs are alleged to be: 20,000 neurons are destroyed when you inhale, inject, smoke X? Will my neurons be wiped out forever by submitting to repeated lecturing? How many neurons does a lecture kill? Is a lecture, like many substances, uplifting if taken with moderation? On the other hand, does education that cannot function without a permanent state of lecturing, surely lead to cirrhosis of the imagination? Does it at least impair the motor functioning of the learning body?

I survived. I am fortunate. I briefly tasted equality, and will live on to perhaps find many other groups where I can learn and work as an equal. Perhaps one day my decomposition will heal. Perhaps in a boarding school in England, perhaps in training center in Tennessee. There are many, however, that still must drag their rotting carcasses through an un-living education.

I leave with the conviction that it is in egalitarian relationships that we most learn, heal, and are empowered. This idea is supported by more than a century of experience with student self-rule among some of the authors mentioned. For those that remain, I believe there are rays of hope. It was

suggested that we organize an elective collectively instead of a core requirement. In a complex world, influencing a decision when one cannot participate in it can be an encouraging alternative form of power. For all that might find themselves in the position of teacher, facilitator, or host of a learning experience, I would encourage them to speak like mimes, through silence.

## Appendix

### CO III Proposal

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.

—Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

#### Goal:

To structure CO III as a peer-driven seminar. To have a critical assessment of the professor's presence and impact on class dynamics.

#### Objectives:

1. Class Format
  - Sparse classroom presence of the professor as determined to be appropriate by the class;
  - Facilitation through feminist process;
  - Consensus-based determination of weekly agenda which includes distribution of responsibilities (i.e. discussion preparation, activity planning, and literature analysis);
  - Post-class assessment of group dynamics to be considered for the next class; and
  - Follow CO III syllabus for readings and assignments;
  - Evaluation of work and final grade determination to be consistent with that of the other CO III classes.
2. Professor's Roles
  - Available for group discussion as deemed appropriate by the class;
  - Active supervisory role outside of classroom. This includes weekly meetings to provide guidance, feedback and support; and
  - Evaluation of student assignments.

## Outcomes:

1. Increased investment in the class as a whole.
  - Increased sense of responsibility for class process (i.e. attendance, accountability for assignments);
  - Increased participation in class discussion; and
  - Equitable distribution of speaking times.
2. Deepened understanding of community organizing concepts through a parallel process of theoretical analysis and practical application.

## Notes

1. International Ido language—according to which Lu = She, He; and Lua = Her, His—will be used for gender-neutral terms.
2. M. Osborne, “Teaching Through Conversation: Making the Hidden Curriculum Part of the Overt Curriculum,” in *Exploring Teaching: Reinventing an Introductory Course*, ed. S. Feiman-Nemser and H. Featherstone, H. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), p.108.
3. A. H. Lathrop and M. Connolly, “Feminist Theory and Collaborative Learning in Seminar Contexts,” *The International Journal for Academic Development*. 5:1 (2000), p. 65.
4. Miles Horton, *The Long Haul: An Autobiography* (NY: Double Day, 1990), p. 47.
5. *Ibid.*
6. James Korn, “Assessment and Group Process: A Good Pedagogical Match,” *PsychCRITIQUES* 49:.4 (2004).
7. Horton, p. 194. Emphasis added.
8. *Ibid.*, p.136.
9. H. Northen and R. Kurland, *Social Work with Groups*, 3rd ed. (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001); and L. Shulman, *The Skills of Helping Individuals, Families, Groups and Communities*, 4th ed. (Itasca, IL: Peacock Press, 1999).
10. Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (New York: NYU Press, 1972).
11. R. Weinbach, *The Social Worker as Manager: A Practical Guide to Success*, 4th ed. (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2003).
12. Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (NY: Seabury Press, 1997), p. 47.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
15. Horton, p.132.

16. D. Kiel and T. Fowler, *A Report on the Experimental Colleges of the Student Government of the University of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1967).
17. A.S. Neill, *Summerhill School: A New View of Childhood* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1992), p. 30.
18. J. Goldberg, "Virtual Learning Communities: A Student's Perspective," *Journal of Instruction Delivery Systems* 13:2 (1999), pp. 16-20.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

# UTOPIA IS POSSIBLE: THE PRESENCE OF LIBERTARIAN IDEAS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY THEORY OF THE *MOVIMIENTO SOCIALISTA DE TRABAJADORES* (MST)<sup>1</sup>

RAÚL M. BÁEZ SÁNCHEZ

### Introduction

This work offers an analysis of libertarian ideas in the thought of the *Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores* (MST).<sup>2</sup> Our research addresses the history of the ideas of this Puerto Rican pro-independence, socialist, and revolutionary movement as a part of Puerto Rico's contemporary political history. We undertook this task aware of the limitations and difficulties presented by the study of recent revolutionary struggles and social movements. In that sense, we assume full responsibility for the methodological shortcomings that the research and analysis may present.

The necessity of addressing this issue arises from three main reasons: first, the lack of research and publications regarding the historical development of more than forty years of the MST's revolutionary praxis; second, the debate and misinterpretations that have been generated by the participation of this socialist organization in the class struggle in Puerto Rico over the past decade, and the positions it assumed during that period;<sup>3</sup> third, and finally, the historiographical vacuum in the study of libertarian ideas in the theory of the Puerto Rican leftist revolutionary movement during the second half of the twentieth century.

The MST's intervention in the class struggle over the last ten years has been mainly oriented towards the teachers' struggle carried out by the *Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico* (FMPR, the Spanish acronym for Federation of Teachers of Puerto Rico), the students' struggle in the University of Puerto Rico from 2005 onward, and the environmental struggle.<sup>4</sup>

The MST's participation in the class struggle, its theoretical postulates, and its immediate proposals led us to consider reviewing the ideas the organization has outlined in public documents throughout its historical development and (on the occasion of the Third Conference of the North American Anarchist Studies Network) analyze the convergences of the tenets of the socialist organization with libertarian ideals.

Our original goal was to conduct a study on the presence of libertarian ideas in the theory and practice of the MST, but we decided to reduce the scope of the research to meet the time criteria established for our paper. This limitation forced us to leave out key elements of the thought of the MST, which have strong libertarian content or might present some similarities with anarchist approaches. Among these we can mention: the practical and ethical dimension of socialism, the stance regarding labor unions, the position regarding strikes and struggle methods, and the autonomy of the struggles of the workers and the poor. Having made this clarification, this chapter will address three fundamental aspects of the thought of the MST: (1) the opening of socialist democracy to the diverse tendencies in Marxist and socialist thought; (2) socialist democracy and its aims; and (3) the theory of the State.

Before beginning the discussion of the MST's revolutionary theory, we intend to address, in general terms, the origins of libertarian tendencies and their bond with anarchism. This should allow us to briefly outline the origins of socialist and communist anarchism and establish a brief definition of what we mean by *libertarian ideology*. Having achieved this, we address in the second part of the chapter the libertarian aspects present in the MST's revolutionary theory. We will emphasize the three items listed in the previous paragraph, comparing the positions of the socialist organization with similar anarchist approaches within the libertarian tradition.

### **Socialism, Communism and the Origins of the Libertarian Tradition**

Throughout the history of socialism, the term "*libertarian*" has been commonly used to refer to anarchist trends or as a synonym of anarchist ideology. However, we understand that the term libertarian should not be applied in a reductionist manner to identify only anarchist ideology and its supporters. From our perspective, the libertarian spectrum represents a wider range that includes both anarchism and other revolutionary tendencies within socialism, as discussed below.

The division between authoritarians and libertarians goes back to the formation of socialist and communist trends linked to the European labor

movement in the mid-nineteenth century. In those early years, the socialist movement split, mainly between supporters of Pierre J. Proudhon and those of L. Auguste Blanqui. But it was not until the debate within the Workers' International Association (The First International) between the supporters of Karl Marx and the supporters of Mikhail Bakunin that the "irreconcilable" separation between authoritarian and libertarian tendencies in the socialist movement was concretized.<sup>5</sup> This division was based on the different analyses each faction made of the role of the State and the political struggle of the working class.<sup>6</sup>

For purposes of this chapter, the term libertarian shall be associated with anarchism, including the work of anarchist theorists such as Piotr Kropotkin, Errico Malatesta, and Nestor Makhno, among others. This is done with the clear objective of differentiating anarchism from those forms of socialism and communism that recognize, as part of their practice, participation in the structures of the capitalist State, or the need to form some sort of revolutionary State.<sup>7</sup> Since the nineteenth century, the term libertarian has been linked to anarchism and used interchangeably with anarchism, reducing the scope of "libertarian ideas" in other traditions of revolutionary socialism.

However, Daniel Guérin points out that since the nineteenth century socialists have been divided into three groups identified by their position on the State, on the participation of the masses in the struggle for its emancipation, and on the management and organization of economic life.<sup>8</sup> These three groups were the authoritarian defenders of the State, the libertarians who supported the participation of the masses and the destruction of the State, and somewhere in between—adherents of the original Marxism that saw the revolution as a task of the masses, and the need for both a transitional government structure and the destruction of the State as tasks of the socialist revolution.<sup>9</sup> Following the same line of thought, some contemporary anarchist authors, such as Michael Schmidt and Lucien van Der Walt, state that although anarchism is a part of libertarianism, not all libertarians are anarchists.<sup>10</sup> From this perspective, the libertarian tradition transcends anarchism and is open to other currents in the broader revolutionary socialist movement.

A panoramic view of aspects of the socialist and communist content of anarchism, as the main libertarian trend within the revolutionary socialist movement, is called for.<sup>11</sup> Some anarchist historians, like Max Netlau and George Woodcock, have attempted to trace the origins of libertarian and anarchist ideas to virtually all instances of rebellion against authority, dating back to Ancient Greece and Asia.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, anarchist historian Paul Avrich identifies the rise of anarchism with the great social and eco-

nomic transformations of the nineteenth century. Avrich notes that “the anarchists called for a social revolution that would abolish all political and economic authority and usher in a decentralized society based on the voluntary cooperation of free individuals.”<sup>13</sup> Although, in his argument, Avrich mentions that anarchism draws on elements of liberalism and socialism, he also leaves out its proletarian origins and openly communist content.

As noted above, the first libertarian socialist trends took shape within the European labor movement, in the context of capitalist industrialization in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the beginning, these groups didn’t define themselves as communists, but maintained a critical stance since they understood that supporters of communism postulated an authoritarian doctrine that subordinated individual liberty to the collective will.<sup>14</sup> Proudhon, one of the pioneers of anarchism, preferred to identify his socialist proposal as mutualism. Meanwhile, Bakunin, often called the father of the anarchist movement, described his socialist project as collectivism.<sup>15</sup> Despite this distinction, the bakuninist faction of the First International has been identified as part of the anarchist currents within the socialist labor movements of the nineteenth century.

Piotr Kropotkin was one of the first libertarians to openly relate anarchism with communism, coining the term *anarchist communism* or *libertarian communism*. Kropotkin stated that “Regarding socialism, most anarchists take it to the last consequences, ergo to a total denial of the wage system and to communism. As for political organization they conclude..., that society’s ultimate goal is to reduce to zero the functions of the government, i.e. achieve a society without government, anarchism.”<sup>16</sup> To which he added that “we [the anarchists] are communists. However, our communism is not that of the authoritarian school: it is anarchist communism, communism without government, free communism.”<sup>17</sup>

In that sense, and for purposes of our analysis, we suggest that the libertarian currents, including anarchism, arise as part of the historical development of the labor movement and embedded from the beginning in the socialist and communist tradition.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, we shall use the term libertarian to refer to certain currents of revolutionary socialism, based on their position on the State, direct democracy and personal or individual democracy.<sup>19</sup> These terms are located within the spectrum from anarchism to certain sectors which are defined as libertarian Marxists.<sup>20</sup>

## **The Revolutionary Theory of the MST and Libertarian Ideology**

Having clarified the scope of the libertarian concept, we will begin our discussion of the libertarian elements in the MST's revolutionary theory. The MST is a Puerto Rican revolutionary socialist organization, composed mainly of workers and students. It emerged in 1982 as a result of the fusion of two Marxist organizations, the *Movimiento Socialista Popular* (MSP, the Spanish acronym for Popular Socialist Movement), and the *Partido Socialista Revolucionario* (PSR-ML, the Spanish acronym for Revolutionary Socialist Party), in 1984 the *Liga Internacionalista de Trabajadores* (LIT, the Spanish acronym for Workers' Internationalist League) joined as well.<sup>21</sup> The fusion of the first two organizations gave way to a new organization that defined itself as revolutionary Marxist, which stated as its main goal the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and socialism.<sup>22</sup>

### **Revolutionary Marxism, Libertarian Socialism, and Socialist Democracy**

The first element we shall discuss refers to the kind of Marxism the Movement postulates, and how this is reflected in its democratic life. As noted earlier the MST defined itself as revolutionary Marxist. This definition finds its origin in the different ideological provenance of the organizations that gave life to it. The PSR was the oldest organization, and since its establishment in 1969 positioned itself as Marxist-Leninist Maoist. But during the late 70s and early 80s, the strong dogmatism that has characterized their "made in China" Marxism had begun to crack.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, even though the MSP defined itself as Marxist-Leninist, it was profoundly influenced by the Che Guevara's political thought, the Vietnamese revolution<sup>24</sup> and the Latin American revolutionary left, especially the Chilean.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, this organization was a product of the schism of the Socialist Left of the *Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño* (PIP, the Spanish acronym for Puerto Rican Independence Party),<sup>26</sup> after having waged a strong ideological battle within the Party, raising the slogan of revolutionary democratic socialism against the social-democratic ideology, the so-called "Creole socialism" of the petty bourgeoisie.<sup>27</sup> Lastly, although the LIT dissolved into the MST two years after its foundation, it should be noted that this organization was of a Trotskyist tendency and, through its closeness to the USA's Socialist Workers Party, strongly influenced by the thought of Ernst Mandel.

This broad ideological spectrum within Marxist and socialist theory led to the articulation of an organization open to militants of all currents of revolutionary socialism. As explained in its general statement *¿Qué es y por qué lucha el Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores?*,<sup>28</sup> the MST states that the organization may be composed of “Marxist socialists, Leninists, anarchists, libertarian socialists, ... and any other denomination in the process of being created.”<sup>29</sup> But this ideological amplitude within the revolutionary socialist family can bring great contradictions when trying to reach agreements for the action. That is why in the MST different trends and perspectives of socialist ideology can coexist, as long as they agree with the strategic goals, and with the principles of the socialism the organization aims to build, and the broadest democracy is assured in the decision-making process.<sup>30</sup>

To ensure this the MST states that decisions will be made by consensus or by majority vote, “respecting the right of the minorities to abide by them or not.”<sup>31</sup> To ensure this right, the Movement acknowledges: (1) “the right to dissent both internally and publicly from the position taken by the majority”;<sup>32</sup> and (2) “the right to organize tendencies and freely express their positions.”<sup>33</sup> The MST adds the vision of ensuring the widest democracy within the socialist organization plus the notion that the party cannot be monolithic since it is as a “product of the discussion and confrontation of different points of view that the organization will enrich its analysis and action.”<sup>34</sup>

Finally, we can assert that to the MST revolutionary Marxism is defined as a critical theory of revolutionary practice. As noted in the *¿Qué es y por qué lucha el MST?*: “Setting aside the dogmatism that has made so much damage to socialism, it is better to consider Marxism as a theory that is used as a guide to help us develop our struggle and that enriches itself by the diversity of interpretations.”<sup>35</sup> Hence, the organization accepts and is nourished by the experiences and the theory of all revolutionary currents of socialism, while maintaining a critical stance towards them, including the classics of Marxism. All this, while emphasizing the concept of historical materialism as a philosophy of praxis and rescuing the ethical-utopian dimension and horizon present in the theory of Marx and Engels, and of libertarian socialism.<sup>36</sup>

### **Character of the Social Formation, the Revolutionary Subject, and the Content of the Socialist Revolution**

Moreover, in its organic documents the MST defines Puerto Rican society as a capitalist colony. This definition states that Puerto Rico is an industri-

al colony where, the political and economic rule of the United States, has implemented a bourgeois society with its characteristic institutions such as: (1) representative democracy; (2) repressive apparatus such as court-houses, police, National Guard, etc.; (3) capitalist economy ruled by industrial, financial and the services sector capital.<sup>37</sup> From this definition the MST concludes that "society's fundamental conflict occurs between, on the one hand, the working class and its allies (students, for example), and, on the other, the North American bourgeoisie and its local appendage,"<sup>38</sup> (the colonial bourgeoisie). For this reason, the organization holds that the Puerto Rican revolution must be socialist in nature.<sup>39</sup>

This statement of the MST has been at odds with the nationalist theory of the traditional colony, predominant within the Puerto Rican pro-independence movement throughout the twentieth century, which establishes the need for the struggle for a bourgeois national State as a main goal of the separatist movement.<sup>40</sup> However, the capitalist development reached by Puerto Rican society makes the working class the backbone of any process of revolutionary change, constituting it as the main social force with revolutionary potential since it is directly linked to the capitalist system's process of production and reproduction.<sup>41</sup>

The previous characterization of the capitalist colony and its definition of the working class as revolutionary subject follow the classical Marxist analysis about the class struggle as the engine for the historic development of societies, coinciding with platformism or libertarian communism,<sup>42</sup> also known as revolutionary class struggle anarchism.<sup>43</sup> In *The Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists*, libertarian communists state that "the whole of human history represents a continuous chain of struggles waged by the working masses in pursuit of their rights, freedom, and a better life. At all times throughout the history of human societies, this class struggle has been the principal factor determining the form and structure of those societies."<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, the platform states that "the fate of humanity today or tomorrow is bound up with the fate of enslaved labor."<sup>45</sup> And therefore "the inception, unfolding, and realization of anarchist ideals have their roots in the life and struggle of the working masses and are indissolubly bound up with the general fate of the latter."<sup>46</sup> It concludes that "the principal forces of social revolution are the urban working class, the peasantry and, partly, the working intelligentsia."<sup>47</sup>

The coincidence between the Marxist interpretation of the MST and platformism partly stems from the fact that the latter does not reject Marx & Engels' theoretical contributions to the revolutionary theory of the working class. In this regard, Mexico's Popular Revolutionary Anarchist

Organization and the Popular Anarchist Union of Brazil in their *Plataforma Internacional del Anarquismo Revolucionario*,<sup>48</sup> sustain that “for revolutionary anarchists, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels provided the proletariat with two discoveries worthy of recognition: (a) Historical Materialism, which allows an interpretation of history as a dialectical process of production-reproduction of social life based on material life ... (b) The theory of surplus value, which discovers and proves the process of capitalist accumulation based on the exploitation and oppression of the working masses.”<sup>49</sup>

From its characterization of Puerto Rican society and from its interpretation of Marxism, the MST posits as its main strategic goal the struggle for independence and socialism. In this struggle, the MST sees independence as a necessary instrument for the working class to build the new socialist society. In that sense, the MST establishes that “independence must be an instrument to build an egalitarian, libertarian and solidary society: the socialist society.”<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, it conceives socialism as “the transition towards a society without classes and without State, in the strict sense: communism,”<sup>51</sup> adding that it “will be democratic or it won’t be socialism.”<sup>52</sup> For the MST, in this new society “the essential element will be the self-management, self-organization and self-government of the workers and other sectors through the establishment of workers’ popular councils throughout the whole society.”<sup>53</sup>

At this point, the organization may coincide with some libertarian and anarchist tendencies, like P.J. Proudhon, the anarchists-communists and anarcho-syndicalism. First, when anarchism emphasizes direct participation, self-management and liberty as fundamental elements of socialism. Establishing that true social justice can only be achieved when it comes to the real freedom possessed by the human beings in society, as Emma Goldman noted when she stated, “only in freedom can man grow to his full stature. Only in freedom will learn to think and move, and give the very best in him.”<sup>54</sup> In that regard, Proudhon prophetically noted that socialism without freedom would be worse than slavery.<sup>55</sup> As we have seen, for the MST the human being’s freedom is a fundamental aspect of democracy, and therefore, socialism has to be democratic. In this, it coincides with Rudolf Rocker who stated that “Socialism will be free, or it will not be at all.”<sup>56</sup> Secondly, in the conception of how to organize and manage society, the MST agrees with anarchist currents like libertarian communism, which establish the basis of socialism in the self-management of society by the workers and the poor through workers’ councils, factory committees, and popular councils.<sup>57</sup>

## Revolutionary Socialism and the “Abolition” of the State

Another important aspect of the MST's socialist conception is its stance on the debate of the role of the government in the revolution and its eventual “extinction.” This has been a topic of debate among the various socialist currents. In recent years, it has also become a point of debate among contemporary anarchist currents, especially the libertarian communists.

Through its historical development, the MST has criticized both the classic Marxist position of the eventual extinction of the State as a social-democratic stance, and the Marxist-Leninist and pro-Soviet stance that has led to the cult of the State. As discussed from the beginning, the MST's socialism aims at the destruction of the capitalist state and its substitution by the organization of workers and poor people in councils. Therefore, the Movement in its General Statement, paraphrasing the old Marxist quote, states that “the emancipation of the workers will be work of the workers themselves.”<sup>59</sup>

That seems to coincide with libertarian socialism, which has emphasized the destruction of the State as a central pillar of its theory for social-revolution. However, this thesis is not unique to anarchism. It is also present in all the socialist and communist tendencies nourished from the experience of libertarian utopian socialists from Fourier to Proudhon, among which is classic Marxism. It is no wonder that the *Communist Manifesto* states that these utopian theorists contributed some important theses to socialism most notably “the transformation of the State into simple production management.”<sup>60</sup> To this, Marx adds in *The Civil War in France* that the Paris Commune demonstrated that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the State machine as it is and use it to their own aims.”<sup>61</sup> As it is explained in the text, the State must be destroyed, implanting in its place a new form of social organization.<sup>62</sup> This shows, as pointed out by Wayne Price, that both anarchism and Marxism aim at the destruction of capitalist society and its repressive apparatus and the establishment of a stateless society.<sup>63</sup>

However, the experiences of the main workers' revolutions of the twentieth century, far from achieving the “abolition” of the State, have all degenerated into totalitarian regimes that have nothing to do with socialism. These experiences have been led by Marxist parties that have implemented an authoritarian and statist reading of the works of Marx. The MST seems to agree with libertarian Marxism<sup>64</sup> in the criticism of State socialism; in the search for an alternative to these experiences they have developed an interpretation of Marx and his theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat that is closer to the anarchist vision. Seeing the transition

State as a semi-State, it would be, as the *Manifesto* states “the proletariat class organized as ruling class,”<sup>65</sup> equivalent to what Engels called “the free association of producers alike.”<sup>66</sup> As noted above, this new organization of society, for both large sectors of anarchism as for non-statist Marxism, must be built from the bottom up, from the mass of combat organizations the workers create in their struggle against capital.

## Conclusion

Through our work, we established that libertarian currents had their origins in the first manifestations of the socialist thought of the nineteenth century, in the period of consolidation of industrial capitalism and its political apparatus, the bourgeois-democratic state. With the development of capitalism, the working class immersed itself in the relentless struggle to improve its working conditions against the rapacious exploitation of capital. As part of this struggle, socialist ideas take shape, dividing themselves from the beginning into the libertarians and the authoritarian currents. On both “sides” of the socialist spectrum communism dominated the horizon to be achieved in the long-term, as the outcome of the class struggle that workers waged against capitalism. Hence, the history of the libertarian and anarchist ideas are inextricably linked to the history of the working-class movement, to revolutionary socialism and communism as the ultimate goal of the workers’ combat against capitalism.

The libertarian ideas of revolutionary socialism are present in the previously reviewed postulates of the revolutionary theory of the MST. However, we cannot categorically assure that the origin of these ideas is a product of the systematic study of the classical anarchists or the formal adoption of any tendency of anarchism by the organization. As noted in the reading of the historical documents of the MST, these libertarian positions come to a greater extent from the movement’s revolutionary experience, from the study of the Puerto Rican reality, from the development of the labor movement, and from a critical study of various international revolutionary processes.

We can also see in the studied documents that the libertarian positions of the organization coincide roughly with some tenets of libertarian communism or platformist anarchism. In the first place, there is the emphasis that this current gives to the class struggle in the historical process and the recognition of the whole working class as the revolutionary subject. Second, there is the role assigned to an anarchist organization of revolutionary militants according to a revolutionary tactic and strategy for socialist revolution. Finally, there is the fact that platformism recognizes historical ma-

terialism and the theory of surplus value as the most important contributions made by Marx and Engels to the theory of revolutionary socialism.

Finally, the MST's definition of participative democracy, the openness to different trends of socialist ideology, the criticism of the positions of the cult of the state, among others, are the result of a libertarian reading of Marxism as a philosophy of praxis. This interpretation conceives the whole of Marxist and socialist theory as a guide for revolutionary action, for the eventual destruction of capitalism and its repressive apparatus, the State.

These elements of the revolutionary thought of the MST have also been colored by the revolutionary praxis that the organization has deployed over 40 years of struggle for a socialist society in Puerto Rico. This goal is undeniably part of the international struggle of the working class to achieve the libertarian utopia, a society without classes and without State.

## Notes

1. This paper was presented as a lecture at the North American Anarchist Studies Network Annual Conference to be held in San Juan (Puerto Rico) during January, 2012. It has been revised and expanded for purposes of publication. We specially thank Dianne Brás-Feliciano, Gisela Báez-Sánchez and Josean A. Laguarda Ramírez for their assistance in the review and translation of it.
2. MST is the Spanish acronym for Socialist Movement of Workers.
3. Throughout its historical development the MST has developed extensive theoretical documents on the Puerto Rican social formation, revolutionary strategy and tactics, and the social struggles in which it has actively participated. For further information on the MST's political postulates visit the MST official online newspaper webpage, *Bandera Roja*, at [www.bandera.org](http://www.bandera.org).
4. The MST has been present in the FMPR and the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) since the foundation of the *Movimiento Socialista Popular* (MSP, Spanish acronym for Popular Socialist Movement) in 1975. The organization is involved in the student struggle through its youth arm, the *Unión de Juventudes Socialistas* (UJS-MST, Spanish acronym for Union of Socialist Youth), which has been one of the major players in the UPR's struggles since 1981. The involvement of MST activists in the FMPR is carried out through the MST's Teachers Caucus. The political and labor union work among Puerto Rican teachers is a bastion of the working class organization that historically has risen within MST as one of its main socialist strategic guidelines. In 2003 the group *Compromiso, Democracia y Militancia* (CODEMI, Spanish acronym for Commitment, Democracy and Militancy), an

effort lead by the MST's Teachers Caucus, reached the FMPR leadership. This paved the way for the adoption of a militant and combative working class stance that challenged the anti-labor and neoliberal education policy of the capitalist state. During the period covered from 2003 to 2010 the FMPR launched a militant struggle for disaffiliation from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT / AFL-CIO). The FMPR was at the head of the resistance fight against the mass layoffs of public employees and the imposition of excise tax (IVU), and developed a process of mass struggle for the negotiation of a collective agreement that led into the 2008 teacher's strike. This strike challenged Law 45, which regulates the unionization of public employees and prohibits work stoppages and strikes. As a result, the FMPR was decertified by the government of Puerto Rico as the exclusive representative of the teachers. Furthermore, at the state university the UJS-MST was active in student movements from 2003 through 2011, including the struggle against militarism and against the presence of Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC), the 2005 strike, the fight against privatization and the strikes of 2010-2011. See: Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores (MST), *Bandera Roja en Línea (BREL)*, at [www.bandera.org](http://www.bandera.org); and MST, Scribd Digital Archive of the Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores. (*Colección Periódico Bandera Roja*, from March 2006 to November-December 2010), at <http://es.scribd.com/collections/2870400/Bandera-Roja?page=1> (last visited November 11, 2011).

5. Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland, CA.: AK Press, 2009), pp. 17-81.
6. This debate is collected in the following publications: Federico Engels, "Sobre la acción política de la clase obrera," in Karl Marx, F. Engels and V.I. Lenin, *Acerca del anarquismo y el anarcosindicalismo* (Moscu: Editorial Progreso, 1960), pp. 31-32; Jaques Freymond (ed.), *La Primera Internacional (II): colección de documentos* (Madrid: ZERO, 1973), pp.177-563.; and David Riazanov, *Curso de marxismo (Conferencias del curso de marxismo en la Academia Comunista de Moscú)* (México, D.F.: Ediciones de Cultura Popular, 1972), pp.131-166.
7. Wayne Price, *What is Anarchist Communism?* (Fordsburg, South Africa: Zabalaza Books, n.d.), pp.1-5.
8. Daniel Guérin, *Marxismo y socialismo libertario* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Proyección, 1964), pp. 11-12.
9. *Ibid.*
10. "The anarchist stressed the need for revolutionary means (organizations, actions, and ideas) to prefigure the ends (an anarchist society). Anarchism is a libertarian doctrine and a form of libertarian socialism; not every libertarian or libertarian socialist viewpoint is anarchist, though." (Schmidt and van der Walt, p.72)
11. For the purposes of our research and analysis it is necessary to approach this issue due to the proliferation of individualist currents within the libertarian

and anarchist traditions. Individualism libertarian or individualist anarchism has its origins in the ideas of Max Stirner. This individualism called “anarchist” or “libertarian” gained further momentum with the ascent of contemporary anarchism and its principles deviate from the class origins, collective action and class struggle as understood by the classical anarchist tradition and libertarian communism. Furthermore, the rise of so-called new social movements and anti-globalization movement has led to the abandonment of class politics (in the classical Marxist or anarchist classics sense) among major sectors within libertarian and anarchist currents. For an overview of the topic, see: Angel Capelletti, *Prehistoria del anarquismo*. (Buenos Aires: Libros de la Araucania, 2006), pp. 179-214; Eric Kerl, “Contemporary Anarchism,” *International Socialist Review* 72 (July-August 2010), pp.38-48; Nestor Makhno, “On Revolutionary Discipline,” in *The Struggle Against the State and Other Essays*. (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 1996), pp. 47-48; Wayne Price, *Revolutionary Class-Struggle Anarchism* (Canada: Black Cat Press, 2008); Price, *What is Anarchist Communism?*, p.11; and Schmidt and van der Walt, pp. 5-27.

12. These authors identify as precursors of anarchism the philosophy of Aristippus, Zeno, Antiphon, the Stoic philosophers and the thought of Lao Tze, among others; George Woodcock, *Socialism from Below: A History of Anarchism*. (Johannesburg: Zabalaza Books, n.d.), pp. 19-28; and Max Netlau, *La Anarquía a través de los tiempos* (Segunda edición cibernética, 2002), pp. 3-9.
13. Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 3.
14. Price, *What is Anarchist Communism?*, p. 3.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Piotr Kropotkin, “El comunismo anarquista: su base y sus principios,” in *Folleto revolucionarios (I). Anarquismo: su filosofía y su ideal* (Barcelona: Turquets Editor, 1977), pp. 46-47.
17. The clarification is ours; *ibid*, p. 64.
18. Schmidt and van der Walt, pp. 20-22, 33-47.
19. Daniel Guérin, *El Anarquismo* (Buenos Aires: Utopía Libertaria, 2003), pp. 42-66.
20. Wayne Price, *The Abolition of The State: Anarchist & Marxist Perspectives* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007).
21. Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores, “Algunos Postulados del MST,” in *Documentos de Estudio: Historia del Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores*, Vol. II (San Juan, PR.: Escuela Socialista Pablo Soto Carriat, 2006), p.1.
22. *Ibid.*
23. From the beginning the *Partido Socialista Revolucionario* became known by the acronym PSR-ML that identified them as part of the “pro-China” tendency within the international Marxist movement. Despite its dogmatism and “pro-Chinese” version of the Marxism, the PSR contributed important interpretations to the analysis of the Puerto Rican social formation from a

- Marxist perspective. The PSR was a pioneer in defining the industrial colonial character of the Puerto Rican society and the socialist content of the independence struggle of Puerto Rico; see Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR-ML), *Puerto Rico, colonia clásica o colonia industrial. Proyecto de tesis sobre el problema nacional en Puerto Rico*. (San Juan, PR: PSR, 1974); and Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR-ML), *Tesis fundamentales del Partido Socialista Revolucionario (ML)* (San Juan, PR: PSR, 1979).
24. See Movimiento Socialista Popular, *¿Qué es el Movimiento Socialista Popular?* (San Juan, PR: MSP, 1975); and Luis Ángel Torres, *Desgastar, debilitar, destruir al enemigo* (Ponencia en el Teatro Sylvia Rexach el 19 de mayo 1975) (San Juan, PR: MSP, 1975).
  25. Luis Ángel Torres, “Coyuntura histórica y fundamentos políticos en el desarrollo del MST (Bosquejo para la historia del MST),” in *Documentos de Estudio: Historia del Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores*, Vol. I. (San Juan, PR: Escuela Socialista Pablo Soto Carriat, 2006), pp.1-5.
  26. The *Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño* (PIP) emerged in the 40s as a scission from the *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD, the Spanish acronym for Popular Democratic Party), the governing party led by the colonial governor, Luis Muñoz Marín. The PIP was organized after the PPD’s leadership abandoned the programatic objective of the independence. Since its foundation the PIP represented the political project of the reformist pro-independence sector of the bourgeois. With the ascent of the class struggle in the late 60s and early 70s important sectors of the party were radicalized by participating in social and political conflicts (communitarian, environmental, labor and student struggles). A trend driven largely by revolutionary socialist workers from the party’s base and the *Juventud Independentista Revolucionaria* (JIU, the Spanish acronym for Pro-Independence University Youth) emerged as part of the process of radicalization within the party. The internal debate leads to the expulsion of the socialists left bloc that later founded the *Grupos de Estudio y Trabajo Socialista* (GETS, the Spanish acronym for Socialist Study and Working Groups). These groups became the organizational base on which the construction of the *Movimiento Socialista Popular* (MSP) was articulated.; *ibid*.
  27. Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores, “Segundo Seminario de la Izquierda Socialista, Documento Guía para el estudio y la discusión: Hacia la creación del nuevo Movimiento, in *Documentos de Estudio: Historia del Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores*, Vol. I, p. 3.
  28. It is translated as follows: *What is the Socialist Movement of Workers and why does it fight?*
  29. Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores, *¿Qué es y por qué lucha el Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores?* (San Juan, PR: MST, 2001), p. 24.
  30. *Ibid*.
  31. “... respetando el derecho de las minorías a acatar o no las mismas.”; *ibid*., pp. 25-26.
  32. “... el derecho a disentir tanto interna como públicamente de las posturas

- asumidas por la mayoría”; MST, “Algunos Postulados del MST...,” p. 1.
33. “... el derecho a organizar tendencias y a estas expresar libremente sus posiciones”; *ibid.*
  34. “Producto del debate y la confrontación de distintos puntos de vista, que la organización podrá enriquecer sus análisis y acciones”; *ibid.*
  35. “Dejando de un lado el dogmatismo que tanto daño le ha hecho al socialismo, es mejor considerar al marxismo como una teoría que se enriquece con la diversidad de interpretaciones y su utilización como guía para ayudarnos a desarrollar nuestra lucha.”; MST, *¿Qué es y por qué lucha?...*, p.18.
  36. See the works of Daniel Guérin, which highlight the influence of previously existing libertarian communism on Marx’s socialist ideas, especially in the debate on the necessity of the state’s extinction as an element of communism, the aspiration for an egalitarian society that allows the “spiritual” development of human being, etc.; Daniel Guérin, *Para un marxismo libertario* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Proyección, 1973), pp. 10-16, 21-36.
  37. MST, *¿Qué es y por qué lucha?...*, pp. 25-26.
  38. “El conflicto fundamental de la sociedad ocurra entre, de una parte la clase obrera y sus aliados (por ejemplo estudiantes), y de la otra la burguesía norteamericana y sus apéndices locales”; MST, “Algunos Postulados del MST...,” p. 1.
  39. *Ibid.*
  40. We can find an outline of this theory in the work of: Wilfredo Matos Cintrón, *La política y lo político en Puerto Rico* (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1980), pp. 54-147.
  41. Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores, *Trabajo Socialista con la Clase Obrera* (San Juan, PR: MST, 2010); MST, *¿Qué es y por qué lucha?...*, p. 4.
  42. Platformist anarchism or libertarian communism originated around the declaration published by the Delo Truda Group, among who were Nestor Makhno and Peter Archinov. The declaration known as *The Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists* calls for the reorganization of revolutionary anarchists, on the basis of the ideological struggle against the individualistic tendencies that promoted dispersion, and for the construction of an international anarchist organization with defined strategies and tactics; Organización Popular Anarquista Revolucionaria y Unión Popular Anarquista, *Plataforma Internacional del Anarquismo Revolucionario* (México: OPAR y UNIPA, 2011), p. 5.
  43. Price, *Revolutionary Class-Struggle Anarchism ...*, pp. 7-8.
  44. Delo Truda Group, *The Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists*, at: <http://www.nestormakhno.info/english/newplatform/general.htm> (accessed November 22, 2011).
  45. *Ibid.*
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. *Ibid.*
  48. *International Platform for Revolutionary Anarchism.*

49. "Para los anarquistas revolucionarios, Carlos Marx y Federico Engels proporcionaron al proletariado 2 descubrimientos dignos de reconocer: a) El Materialismo Histórico, que permite la interpretación de la Historia como un proceso dialéctico de producción-reproducción de la vida social en base a la vida material... b) La teoría de la Plusvalía, que descubre y demuestra el proceso de acumulación capitalista basado en la explotación y opresión de las masas trabajadoras"; OPAR and UNIPA, *Plataforma Internacional...*, p. 13.
50. "La independencia debe ser un instrumento para construir una sociedad igualitaria, libertaria y solidaria: la sociedad socialista"; MST, *¿Qué es y por qué lucha?*..., p. 12.
51. "La transición hacia una sociedad sin clases y sin estado en sentido estricto: el comunismo"; *ibid.*, p. 13.
52. "Será democrático o no será socialismo"; *ibid.*
53. "El elemento esencial será la auto-gestión, la auto organización y auto-gobierno de los trabajadores y demás sectores mediante la constitución de consejos obreros y populares en toda la sociedad"; MST, *¿Qué es y por qué lucha?*..., " p. 14.
54. Emma Goldman, "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For," in *Anarchism and Other Essays*. (New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1969), p. 61.
55. Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005), p. 14.
56. *Ibid.*
57. See Delo Truda, *The Organizational Platform...*
59. MST, *¿Qué es y por qué lucha?*..., p. 19.
60. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *El Manifiesto Comunista* (San Juan, PR: Editorial Laura, 2011), p. 55.
61. Karl Marx, "La Guerra Civil en Francia," in *Obras Escogidas* (Moscu: Editorial Progreso, 1959), p. 295.
62. Price, *The Abolition of The State...*
63. *Ibid.*
64. We refer to non-statist and non-authoritarian Marxist readings. Among these are the Marxist interpretations of Anton Pannekoek (also known as council communism), the thought of Rosa Luxemburg, Antonio Gramsci, Karl Korsch, Michael Löwy, etc. We can also add to these currents Marxism's interpretations from the anarchist tradition, as those of Daniel Guérin and Wayne Price, among others.
65. Marx and Engels, *Manifiesto...*, p. 46.
66. Federico Engels, *El origen de la familia, la propiedad privada y el Estado* (San Juan, PR: Jorge A. Mestas, ediciones, S.L., 2001), p. 224.

## CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

# ANTI-COLONIAL ANARCHISM, OR ANARCHISTIC ANTI-COLONIALISM: THE SIMILARITIES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY THEORIES OF FRANTZ FANON AND MIKHAIL BAKUNIN

RYAN ALLEN KNIGHT

Speaking in very different social spheres, what exactly could a Russian anarchist writing in the mid-nineteenth century have in relation with an anti-colonial psychiatrist writing in the mid-twentieth century? The similarity could be understood simply by looking at their revolutionary intent. When we examine Mikhail Bakunin and Frantz Fanon's revolutionary theories, we see very stark overlapping thoughts regardless of the different time and place in which they were writing. This leads me to believe that anarchism and anti-colonial struggles speak to one another. By looking at them together, I think we can better understand revolutionary change outside of the urban working class and top-down revolutions which have often lead revolutionary debate.

I want to explore these similarities by looking at Frantz Fanon's theory of colonial overthrow, in tandem with Mikhail Bakunin's thoughts on social revolution. I will do this paying particular attention to the similarities between the two in their focus on peasantry as a revolutionary force, violence as a mode of revolution, and skepticism of post-revolution bourgeois dictatorship. Unlike classical Marxism, which relies on the industrial working class while ignoring other revolutionary forces, Mikhail Bakunin's anarchism speaks to issues of anti-colonial revolutions. This is because Bakunin understood domination and resistance outside of the simple bourgeois and proletariat antagonism that is inherent in capitalism. He didn't dismiss this, but understood that other factors, and other players, will help produce a truly anti-authoritarian revolution.

At the same time, Fanon pushed his thinking beyond a classical Marxist understanding, to further understand the multiple layers of domination and exploitation within colonialism. Rather than reducing his understanding to a basic class analysis, Fanon looked to the psychological realm. He attempted to understand the individual motivations, reactions, and overall feelings that functioned within the colonized peoples during a revolutionary movement against colonialism.

In order to examine Bakunin and Fanon's thoughts on revolutionary change and revolutionary movements, I think it is important to clarify the differing historical contexts that both theorists were writing in, which will in turn make the similarities between anti-colonial and anarchist struggles more recognizable. Bakunin's thinking emerged from the anti-capitalist debates during the nineteenth century in Europe. The writings I cover reflect Bakunin's firm commitment to anti-authoritarianism both within revolutionary movements and society as a whole. His thoughts on the peasantry can be seen in his work, *Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis*, which covers Bakunin's revolutionary thoughts in the French context of 1870. These letters were written during the downfall years of the Franco-Prussian war, at a time when France faced inevitable defeat. "The government of Napoleon III had collapsed and the succeeding provisional republican government was hopelessly demoralized. The French armies were in full retreat and the Prussian troops were at the gate of Paris."<sup>1</sup> Bakunin's revolution looked further than just simple repulsion of the foreign Prussian Army, but also aimed to defend the revolution against internal enemies that sought to advance their own power in the revolutionary wake.

Frantz Fanon, writing nearly a century later, was embedded in the anti-colonial struggles of Algeria against French colonial rule. In the *Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon explores the psychological effects of colonialism on the colonized and the modes needed to mentally and physically overthrow colonial domination. Fanon was interested in the process of decolonization through revolution, and the developments and characteristics such a process would take. He understood in many ways that the colonial situation was different than the industrial working class revolutions that Marx had put so much faith in. Through this understanding, Fanon's thoughts on revolution resemble Bakunin more so than Marx, although Fanon is often categorized in the Marxist group.

## **Peasantry as a Revolutionary Group**

What motivates people to seek revolutionary change? What groups are most likely to be driven to revolutionary action? What groups or social

classes are going to need to unite in order to push for a more expansive revolutionary movement? These are questions that continually nag activists and theorists, and these same questions were engaged and agreed on in many aspects by Bakunin and Fanon. Both Bakunin and Fanon saw a distinction between the urban working class and the rural dwelling peasants; both in their lifestyles, as well as in their revolutionary potential. Unlike many of the more Marxist influenced thinkers, both Bakunin and Fanon agreed that the peasantry was a revolutionary group. Furthermore, both theorists saw the need to combine the peasantry and the urban working class into a unified revolutionary force.

Similar to Marx, Mikhail Bakunin looked at the peasantry (particularly their culture) as though it was in a kind of “innocent” state, untouched by the relations of industrialization and capitalism. However, unlike classical Marxism, which saw this as a flaw in their revolutionary potential, Bakunin felt that this innocent state was revolutionary in the sense that the rural peasantry was untarnished by the teachings of the bourgeoisie. By maintaining their rural traditions, they didn't yet adopt the values of the bourgeoisie or the capitalist ideology. Bakunin writes,

Unspoiled by overindulgence and indolence, and only slightly affected by the pernicious influence of bourgeois society, the peasants still retain their native energy and simple unsophisticated folkways.<sup>2</sup>

For Bakunin, this native energy allowed and fostered a spirit of revolt, as the peasantry very much favored their traditional lifestyle to the impediment of capitalist or state intervention.

Bakunin believed that the material reality and marginalized existence of the peasants would feed fervor for revolutionary change. It wasn't only the industrial working class that would be roused into revolutionary consciousness, but the rural dwellers as well. He writes,

The peasants are made revolutionary by necessity, by the intolerable realities of their lives; their violent hatreds, their socialist passions have been exploited, illegitimately diverted to support the reactionaries.<sup>3</sup>

In the tradition of historical materialism, Bakunin recognized that it was the material conditions of the peasantry that would lead them to revolutionary change. They too faced the poverty and inhumane conditions that were initiated by private property and other essential characteristics of capitalism. In effect, they also were a revolutionary class.

Although Bakunin saw revolutionary potential within the peasantry, he recognized that the peasants alone wouldn't be effective in carrying out

a full social revolution. However, in cooperation with the urban working class, he saw that a true revolutionary movement could be built; it was the unification of all exploited people that held the potential for emancipation. Bakunin recognized the negative attitudes these two groups held toward one another and understood the need to unify them. On one hand, Bakunin argued that the urban workers needed to undo a variety of prejudices they held against the rural workers. Bakunin writes,

If we really want to be practical; if, tired of daydreaming, we want to promote the Revolution; we must rid ourselves of a number of dogmatic bourgeois prejudices which all too many city workers unfortunately echo. Because the city worker is more informed than the peasant, he often regards peasants as inferiors and talks to them like a bourgeois snob.<sup>4</sup>

Adopting much of the same superiority complex that the bourgeoisie held over the workers, Bakunin argued that the urban working classes looked down on the rural workers as uneducated, and thus incapable of understanding the dynamics of socialism. On the other hand, Bakunin argued that the rural peasants also held a sort of hatred or contempt for the urban working classes. Bakunin writes,

The peasants feel that they are despised by the city workers,...that the cities want to exploit them and force them to accept a political system that they abhor, [and]...the peasants think that the city workers favor the collectivization of property and fear that the socialists will confiscate their lands, which they love above all else.<sup>5</sup>

For Bakunin, this animosity toward one another, between the urban working class and the rural peasantry, created the most glaring obstacle to an effective social revolution.

With Frantz Fanon, we see the same understanding of the peasantry as a revolutionary force, as well as the need to unify the rural and urban workers. In much of the same manner as Bakunin, Frantz Fanon argued that the peasantry, living in rural areas with little contact to bourgeois values, retained a vibrant commitment to their traditional customs and ways of living. Fanon writes,

In fact, a rational analysis of colonial society would have shown them that the colonized peasants live in a traditional environment whose structures have remained intact, whereas in the industrialized countries, it is these traditional circles that have been splintered by the progress of industrialization.<sup>6</sup>

Fanon argued that by living in the periphery of colonial society, the peasants held strongly to their original way of life, rather than adopting the values of the colonizer. It was from this disconnect with the metropolis—the heart of colonial rule—that the rural peasantry could maintain their traditional social structures. Fanon writes,

The peasant who stays put is a staunch defender of tradition, and in a colonial society represents the element of discipline whose social structure remains community-minded.<sup>7</sup>

For Fanon, the maintenance of community and traditional ways of life made the peasantry more of a revolutionary force than the urban working classes, who were in constant contact with colonial society.

Much like Bakunin, Fanon recognized that the material realities of peasant life too were a source of discontent and, in effect, revolutionary consciousness. Looking beyond the conditions of the urban industrial worker, Fanon recognized that the peasant workers faced similar harsh conditions, as well as the encroachment of industrial life on their traditional way of life. He writes,

But it is obvious that in colonial countries only the peasantry is revolutionary. It has nothing to lose and everything to gain. The underprivileged and starving peasant is the exploited who very soon discovers that only violence pays.<sup>8</sup>

It is within this state of necessity and extreme exploitation that the peasantry is in a position to give all for the cause of revolution.

In looking at the relationship between the urban population and the rural peasants, Fanon outlined the need for unity between the two exploited classes, rather than mistrust or discontent. Much like Bakunin, Fanon recognized that the rural peasantry didn't trust the urban peoples, and the urban peoples looked at the rural peasants in a negative manner. Fanon writes,

The peasants distrust the town-dweller. Dressed like a European, speaking his language, working alongside him, sometimes living in his neighborhood, he is considered to the peasant to be a renegade who has given up everything which constitutes the national heritage.<sup>9</sup>

The peasants, as the most marginalized of the colonized population, look at the urban dwellers and members of the nationalist parties as adopting the values of the colonizer. As strong defenders of their indigenous customs and traditions, they feel abandoned by the city dwellers that have

assimilated into the ways of life of their oppressors. In the same manner, this distrust is cast from the nationalist parties and the urban workers at the peasantry. Fanon writes,

The large majority of nationalist parties regard the rural masses with great mistrust. The masses give them the impression of being mired in inertia and sterility. Fairly quickly the nationalist party members (the urban workers and intellectuals) end up passing the same pejorative judgment on the peasantry as the colonists.<sup>10</sup>

This mistrust between the two groups of the colonized population reflects the disunity of an organized force, a facet that remains essential to a successful revolutionary overthrow. The city dwellers, living among their colonizer and the bourgeois parties, look at the peasants as backward, uneducated, and incapable of understanding the processes and goals of revolutionary change. All the while, the peasants (as stark defenders of their traditional way of life) remain distrustful of these urban dwellers for adopting the lifestyles of their original oppressor, the colonizer.

### **Violence as a Mode of Revolution**

Moving on, I would like to examine the way both thinkers look at the issue of violence within revolutionary movements. Although both Bakunin and Fanon were skeptical about the long-lasting revolutionary potential of violence, they recognized that violence was an inevitable and necessary element in the revolutionary development. I think both thinkers recognized violence as an unfortunate, but crucial, step in the sweeping destruction of bourgeois and/or colonial society.

Bakunin argued that this violence wasn't without tactical consideration or carried out in cold blood, but was rather a conscious maneuver in carrying out the all-encompassing destruction of the bourgeois society. Bakunin writes,

At the outset (when the people, for just reasons, spontaneously turn against their tormentors) the revolution will very likely be bloody and vindictive. But this phase will not last long, and will never degenerate into cold, systemic, terrorism... It will be a war, not against particular men, but primarily against the anti-social institutions upon which their power and privilege depend.<sup>11</sup>

For Bakunin, violence was an inevitable component of the revolution. It would be a spontaneous action carried out against the foundational institu-

tions for which the bourgeois society was built. This violence wouldn't be the heart of the revolution, but it would play an important part at a particular moment during the process.

Bakunin understood that violence was a necessary component in what we can broadly call destruction, and that this destruction was also a creative process. This entailed violence to property, but also non-violent revolt that would be beneficial in carrying out the destruction of the bourgeois order. For Bakunin, this destruction would dismantle and eliminate all the forces of authority and domination that were burdening the masses. From there, the masses could freely and spontaneously create a new social order. Bakunin writes, "Revolution requires extensive widespread destruction, since in this way, and only this way, are new worlds born...."<sup>12</sup> For Bakunin, violence was part of the overall destruction involved in overthrowing the old systems of power, and allowing society to be created from the unrestricted passions of the newly freed masses.

Frantz Fanon also recognized the role of violence within his understanding of anti-colonial revolutionary movements. Fanon understood that violence was a reciprocal process in colonization and then decolonization. He recognized that the extreme violence perpetrated by the colonizer on the colonized population would inevitably be reflected in the violence carried out by the very people they had oppressed, during the process of decolonization.

The tract merely expressed what every Algerian felt deep down: colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence.<sup>13</sup>

For Fanon, this violence would sweep away the inferiority of the colonized and help in regaining their identity and independence. Violence was the only means by which they could restore their humanity and self-confidence. Fanon sums this up well,

At the individual level, violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them and restores their confidence.<sup>14</sup>

He saw violence as an act that both uplifted the colonized mentally, and was most likely their only means of response, having been continually subjected to it by the actions of the colonizer.

## **Skepticism of Bourgeois Appropriation of the Revolution**

Lastly, it is important to examine Bakunin and Fanon's shared skepticism of bourgeois elements emerging during and/or after the revolution. Although Bakunin and Fanon differ in their overall revolutionary intentions, I believe they share a common concern for the emergence of a group or class attempting to benefit from revolutionary developments. Both theorists share the idea that revolutionary passion can often be mistaken and usurped by those seeking to gain power during or following the revolution.

Writing directly from the anarchist tradition, Bakunin was highly skeptical about the return of any form of state power during or after the revolution. For Bakunin, a true peoples' revolution was a passionate, spontaneous action of the masses against their common enemy. To introduce any sort of authority or authoritarian leadership into the revolutionary movement would squash the popular rebellion for which Bakunin clearly supported. Bakunin writes,

The immediate, if not the ultimate, goal of the revolution is the extirpation of the principle of authority in all its possible manifestations; this aim requires the abolition and, if necessary, the violent destruction of the state.<sup>15</sup>

For Bakunin, the urge existed for many so-called revolutionaries to attempt to guide the revolution to their own ends, or to the ends of their governmental authority. Bakunin recognized that the usurpation of power, from the people back into the hands of government, meant the total negation of the revolutionary cause, and a complete negation of true liberty. It was essential to eliminate structures of authority both within the movement, as well as the building of a new society.

Bakunin understood that if these authoritarian elements were not eliminated, the same structures and ideologies of power would weave their way back into the social fabric. In doing this, the new usurpers of state power would quickly steer the institutions in a direction that would benefit them. Thus, the society would return to the oppressive, domineering, and exploitative state that consisted in the bourgeois society.

Frantz Fanon differed from Bakunin in that Fanon was more so involved in a nationalist movement, intent on creating a newly independent state. However, if we read Fanon more closely, we see the same warnings against exploitative elements emerging during and after the revolution that Bakunin considered. Fanon's theory, which was based in the colonial context, was specifically skeptical about bourgeois nationalist parties. He understood that having learned the teachings of the colonizer and adopting

their values and ways of societal structure, the bourgeois nationalist parties were prone to taking on the role of the colonizer in the emerging national government. Fanon writes,

We will see, unfortunately, that the national bourgeoisie often turns away from this heroic and positive path, which is both productive and just, and unabashedly opts for the anti-national, and therefore, abhorrent, path of a conventional bourgeoisie, a bourgeois bourgeoisie that is dismally, inanely, and cynically bourgeois.<sup>16</sup>

Fanon argued that during the period of colonial overthrow, nationalist parties would form in attempting to create a nationalistic movement among the colonized. However, rather than working for and amongst the people, Fanon warned that the nationalist bourgeoisie was often rubbing shoulders with the colonizer. In effect, the nationalist bourgeoisie was prone to adopting the same social structures that colonization relied upon, simply replacing their previous oppressors' place at the top of the power structure. Fanon argued that the interest of the peoples must be the main revolutionary voice, and not just the interests of the national bourgeoisie. He writes,

The national bourgeoisies, however, who, in region after region, are in a hurry to stash away a tidy sum for themselves and establish a national system of exploitation... this is why we must understand that African Unity can only be achieved under pressure and through leadership by the people, i.e., with total disregard for the interests of the bourgeoisie.<sup>17</sup>

In much the same manner as Bakunin, Fanon understood that the revolution was meant to feed the needs of the people as a whole and not the needs of another emerging class or party intent on exploitation. He was very skeptical about the bourgeois nationalist parties usurping the spirit of the revolutionary masses to achieve their own ends.

Having examined these three elements that link Bakunin and Fanon together, it's hard to deny the similarities in their thinking, particularly in regard to revolution. I think this is all the more interesting because both thinkers likely would have rejected each others' overall projects. Bakunin was an anarchist, arguing for a stateless, anti-authoritarian society, while Fanon was more of a nationalist, arguing for an independent state, and often blatantly dismissing anarchism. However, the similarities in the way they approach revolution cannot be denied. This leads me to believe that anarchism and anti-colonial struggles have something important in common, which I hope is clear in the comparison I have made above. Furthermore, I think it would be important to share these commonalities, to unite

common struggles that may often be treated as opposing or differing from one another.

### Notes

1. Sam Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchism* (Montreal, Canada: Black Rose Books, 2002), p. 183.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
6. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1961), p. 66.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
11. Dolgoff, p. 100.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 334.
13. Fanon, p. 23.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
15. Dolgoff, p. 202.
16. Fanon, p. 202.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

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